



NARUTO

SHONEN JUMP/MANGA

Story & Art by

Masashi Kishimoto volume

4



岸本 齊史

Thank you for your constant fan letters.
When I'm tired...
When I'm bored...
When I'm groaning in pain...
When I'm sleepy...
They always help to flip my heart's switch.
I read them all.
Thanks truly!!

—Masashi Kishimoto, 2000



Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** ("Mechanism"). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.





NARUTO VOL. 4
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in **SHONEN JUMP** #15-18.

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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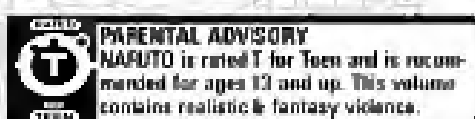
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www.shonenjump.com

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

NARUTO™



VOL. 4

THE NEXT LEVEL

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO



KAKASHI カカシ

The elite ninja assigned to train Naruto, Sasuke, and Sakura. His *sharingan* ("mirror-wheel eye") allows him to reflect and mimic enemy *ninjutsu*.



ZABUZA 再不斬

A ruthless ninja assassin and mass-murderer known as "The Demon." He specializes in techniques involving water and mist.



HAKU 白

A mysterious orphan who befriends Naruto. Naruto doesn't realize that his new friend is Zabuza's loyal masked assistant, who fights with chiropractic needles.



TAZUNA タズナ

An old bridge-builder struggling to bring prosperity to the Land of Waves. The evil millionaire Gato has hired Zabuza to stop him from completing his newest bridge.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Twelve years ago, a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The Hokage, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to become a ninja-in-training, learning the art of *ninjutsu* with his classmates Sakura and Sasuke.

Tired of easy exercises, Naruto and his classmates make the mistake of asking their teacher, Kakashi, for a really hard assignment... and find themselves in the Land of Waves, protecting a bridge-builder named Tazuna. But the job turns truly dangerous when the notorious assassin Zabuza shows up. While Kakashi holds off Zabuza and Sakura protects Tazuna, Naruto and Sasuke face Zabuza's assistant Haku. In the battle, Sasuke sacrifices himself to save Naruto from Haku's deadly throwing needles. Now, watching his classmate fall, Naruto feels something terrible stir within him...

SAKURA サクラ

Smart and studious, Sakura is the brightest of Naruto's classmates, but she's constantly distracted by her crush on Sasuke. Her goal: to win Sasuke's heart!

NARUTO ナルト

When Naruto was born, a destructive fox spirit was imprisoned inside his body. Spurned by the older villagers, he's grown into an attention-seeking troublemaker. His goal: to become the village's next Hokage.

SASUKE サスケ

The top student in Naruto's class, Sasuke comes from the prestigious Uchiha clan. His goal: to get revenge on a mysterious person who wronged him in the past.



NARUTO

VOL. 4

THE NEXT LEVEL

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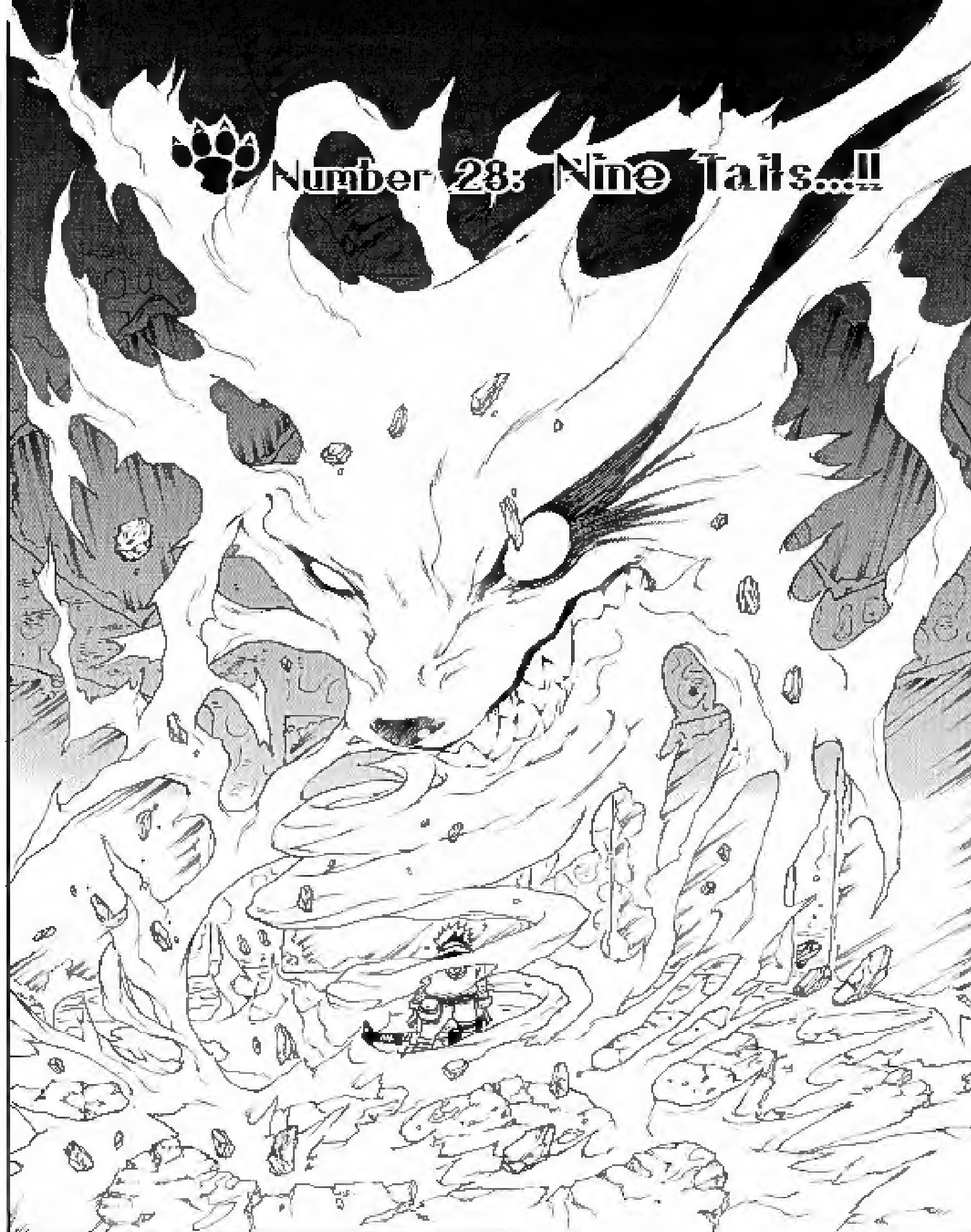


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Number 28: Nine Tails...II



...A-AND AN
AFFALLING
CHAKRA
IT IS!



...IMPOSSIBLE...!!
HIS CHAKRA IS
PHYSICALLY
MANIFESTING
ITSELF!



WHO-
WHAT
ON EARTH
IS HE?!!



...HIS HAND...
THE WOUNDS
ARE...
HEALING
THEMSELVES!





UNBELIEVABLE.
IT CAN'T BE!
AFTER ALL
THIS TIME.

NARUTO!!

KAKASHI
NO... IT
SEEMS
BIGGER
THAN
KAKASHI,
SOMEHOW
BUT
WHO?

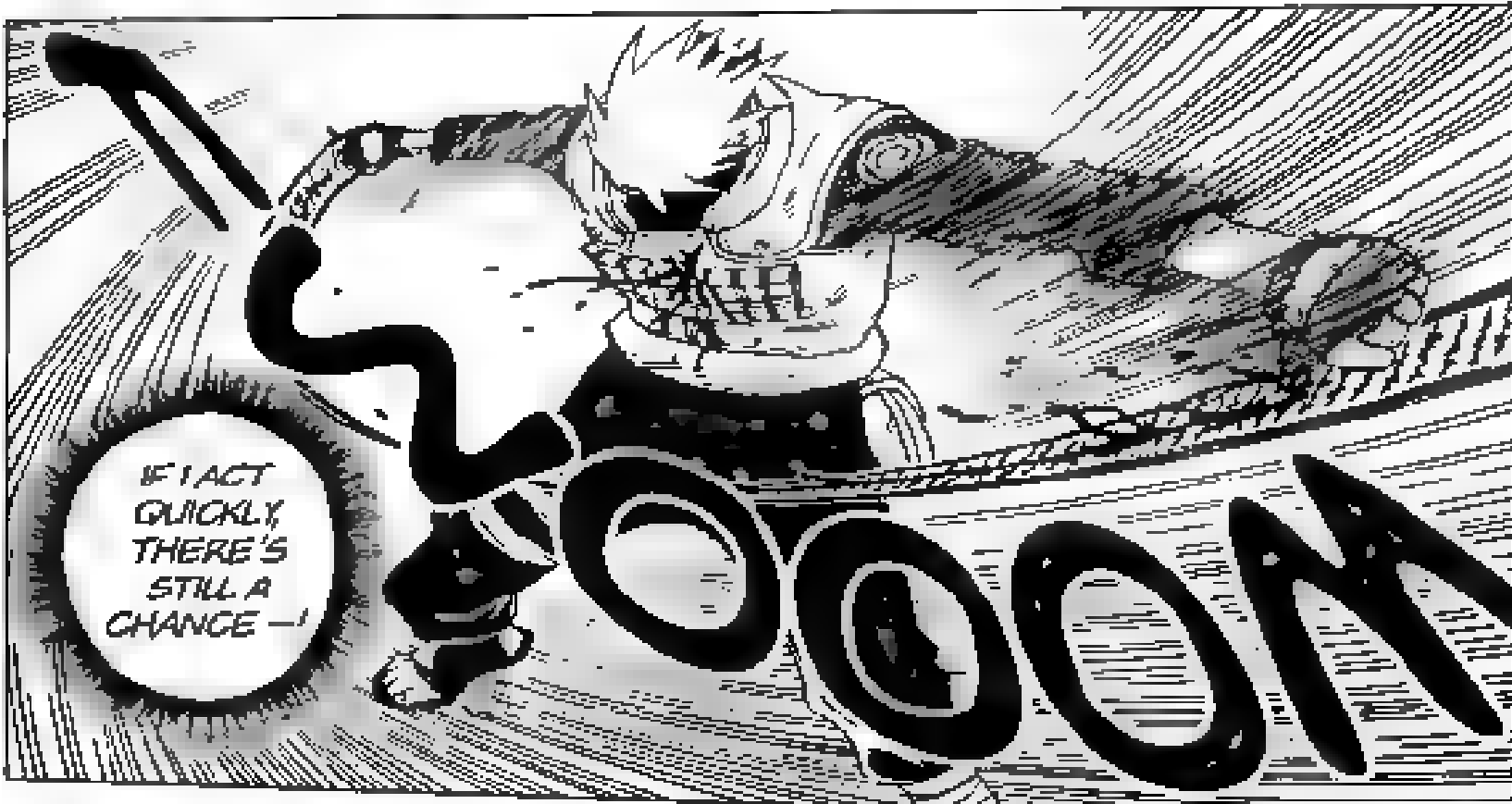
THIS
CHAKRA =
I'M FEELING
SOMETHING
ABOUT IT...
FILLS ME
WITH
DREAD!

- HAS THE
BINDING
SPELL
BEGIN
TO UNRAVEL?
IS THE SEAL
BROKEN?

BUT THE SEAL
HAS SLIPPED
A LITTLE,
OR CRACKED. AND
THE POWER
OF THE NINE-
TAILED
DEMON FOX IS
BLEEDING
THROUGH.

I SENSE THAT
WE'RE SAFE -
FOR NOW IT
HASN'T BROKEN
THROUGH
YET... NOT
COMPLETELY.

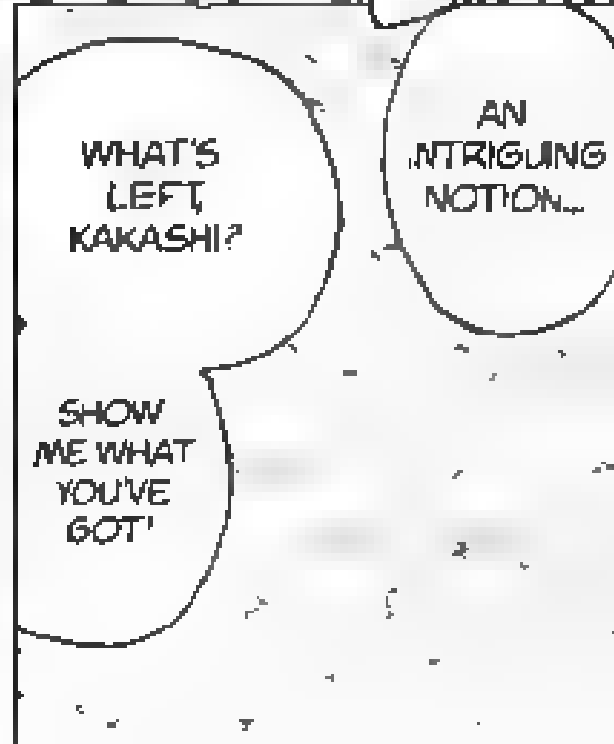
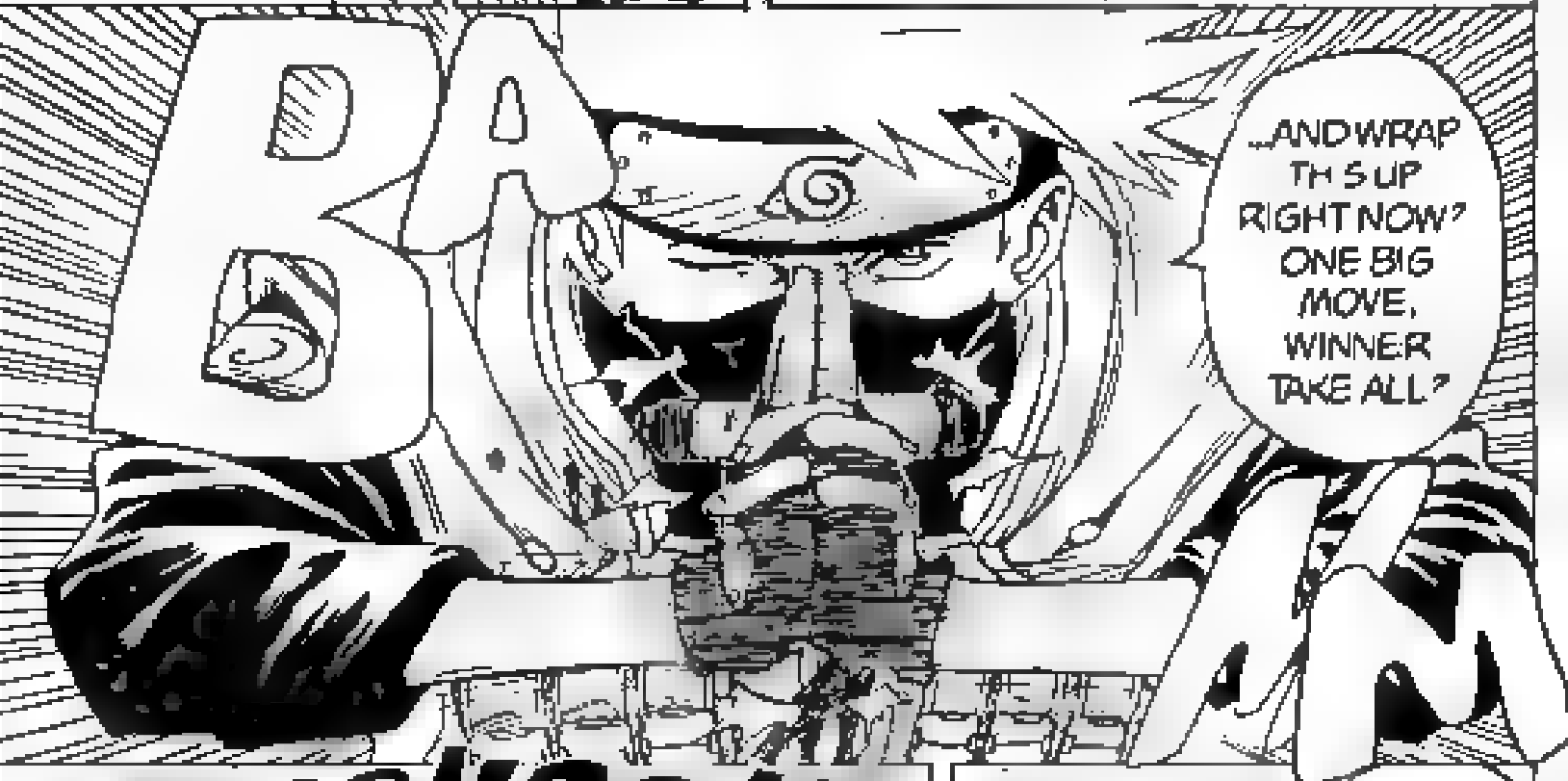
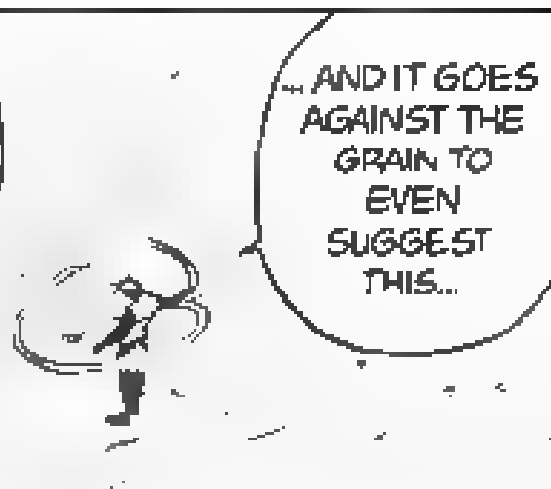
... SENSE...

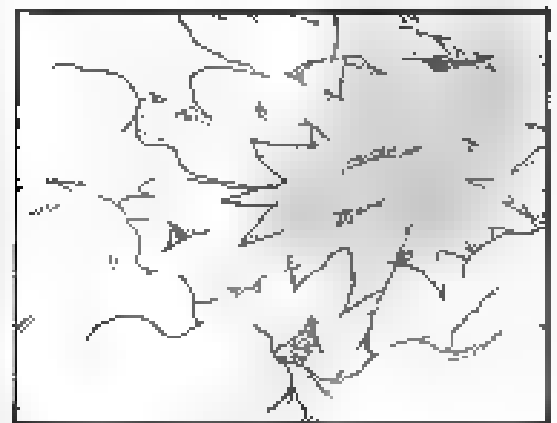
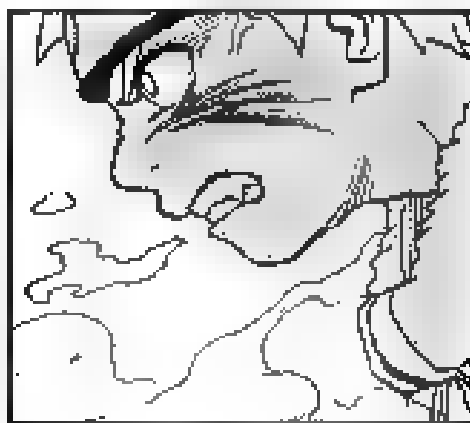
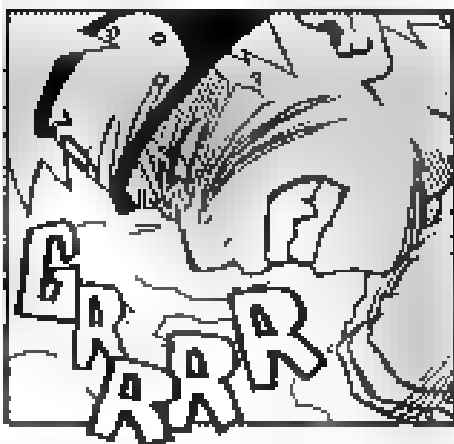


IF I ACT
QUICKLY,
THERE'S
STILL A
CHANCE —!

..I'M A
BUSY MAN
YOU'RE A
BUSY MAN
WE'VE BOTH
GOT A LOT ON
OUR PLATES..

LISTEN
TO ME...
ZABUZA..





HE'S SO
BLOODTHIRSTY!
HE'S COMPLETELY
CHANGED
FROM THE BOY
OF JUST
MINUTES AGO!

FWOOSH!



POW!

FAA!



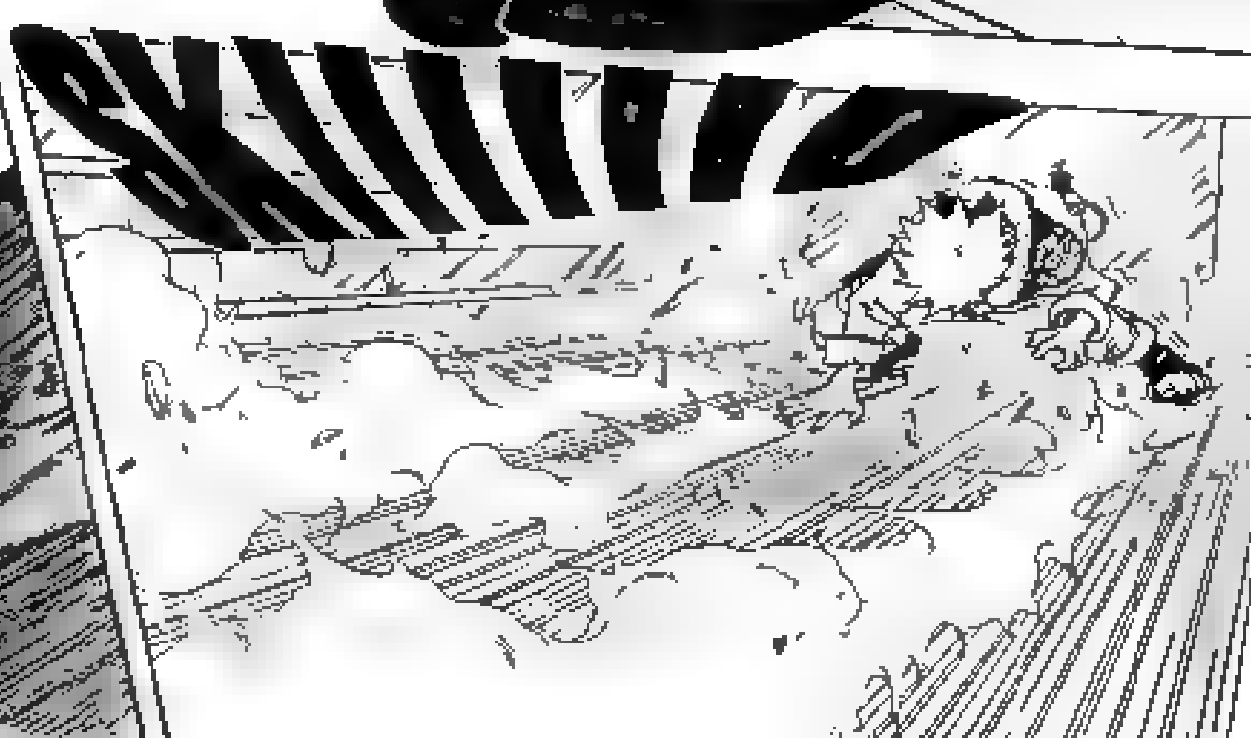
FWOOSH!

HE HE
DEFLECTED
THEM...
WITHOUT EVEN
TOUCHING
THEM?



GLA!

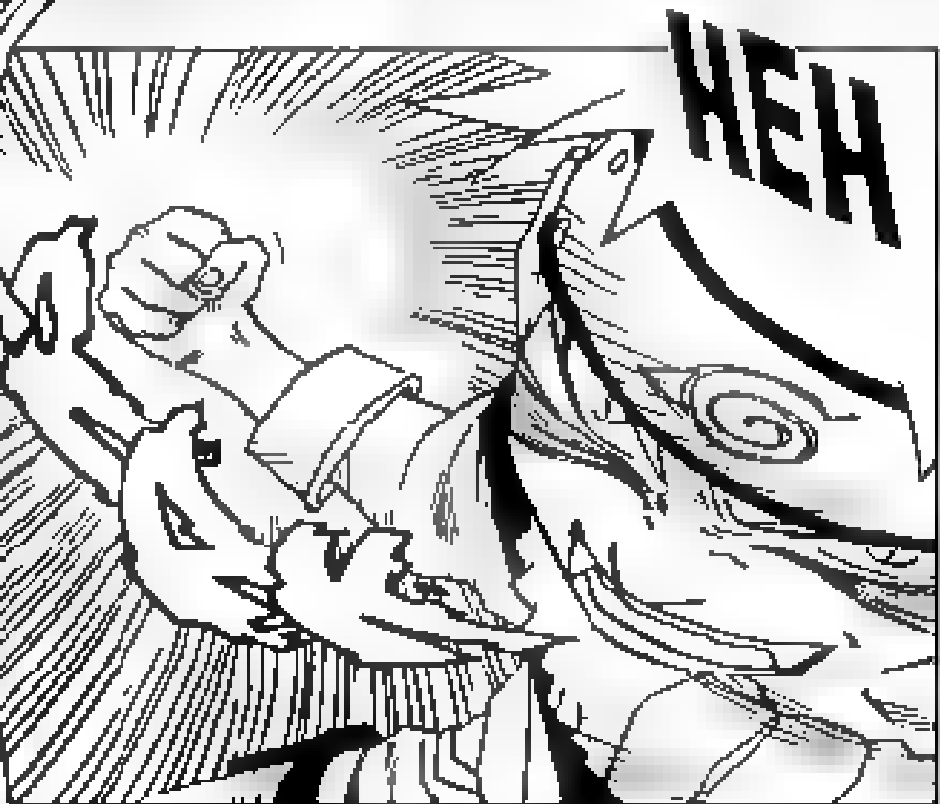
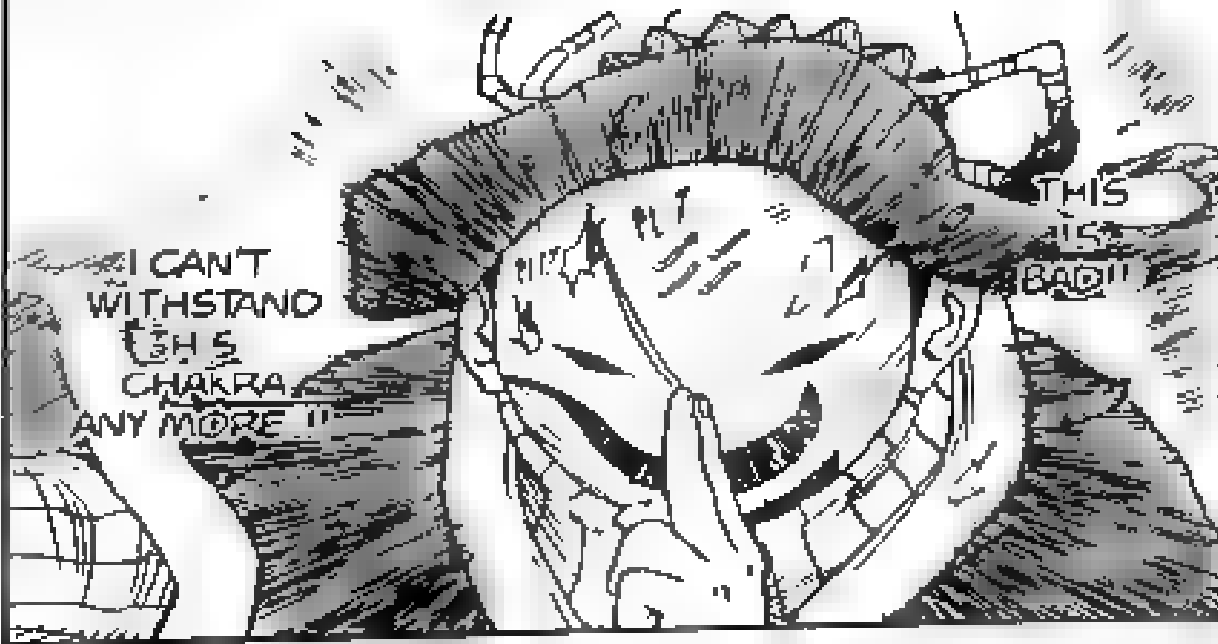






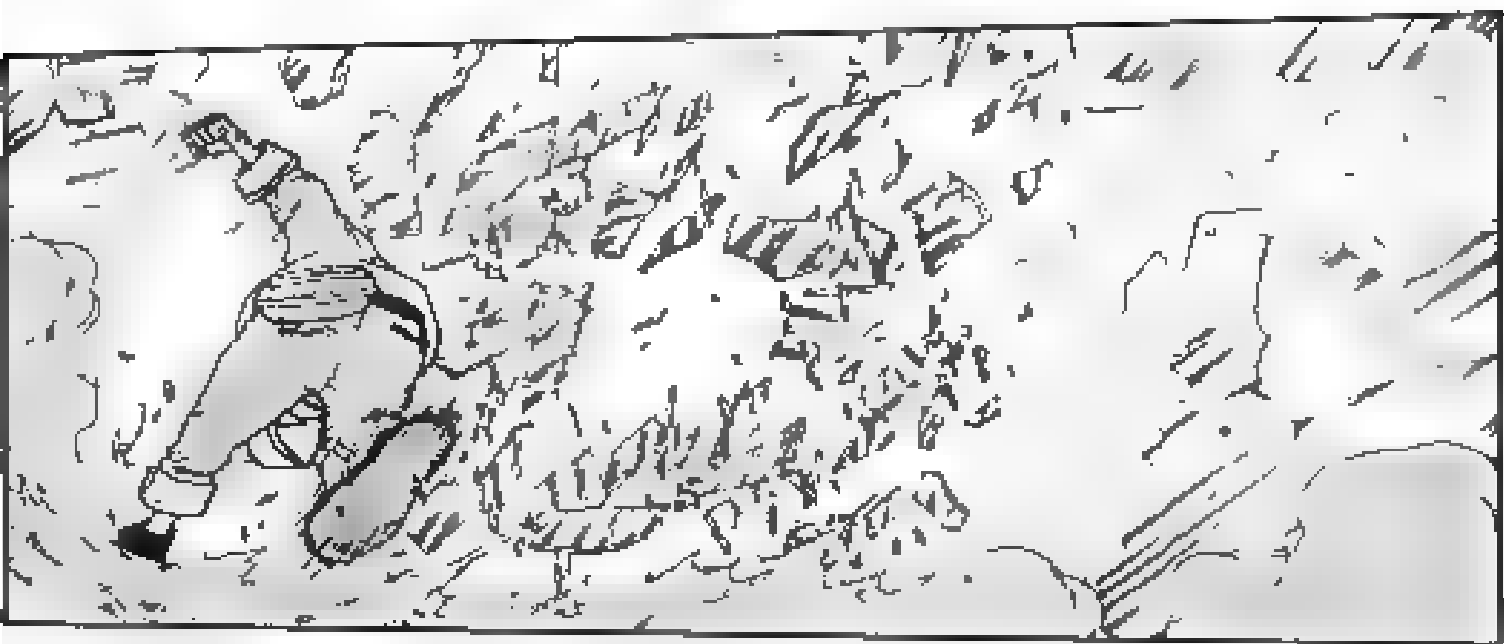
HE
COULDN'T
HAVE--!!

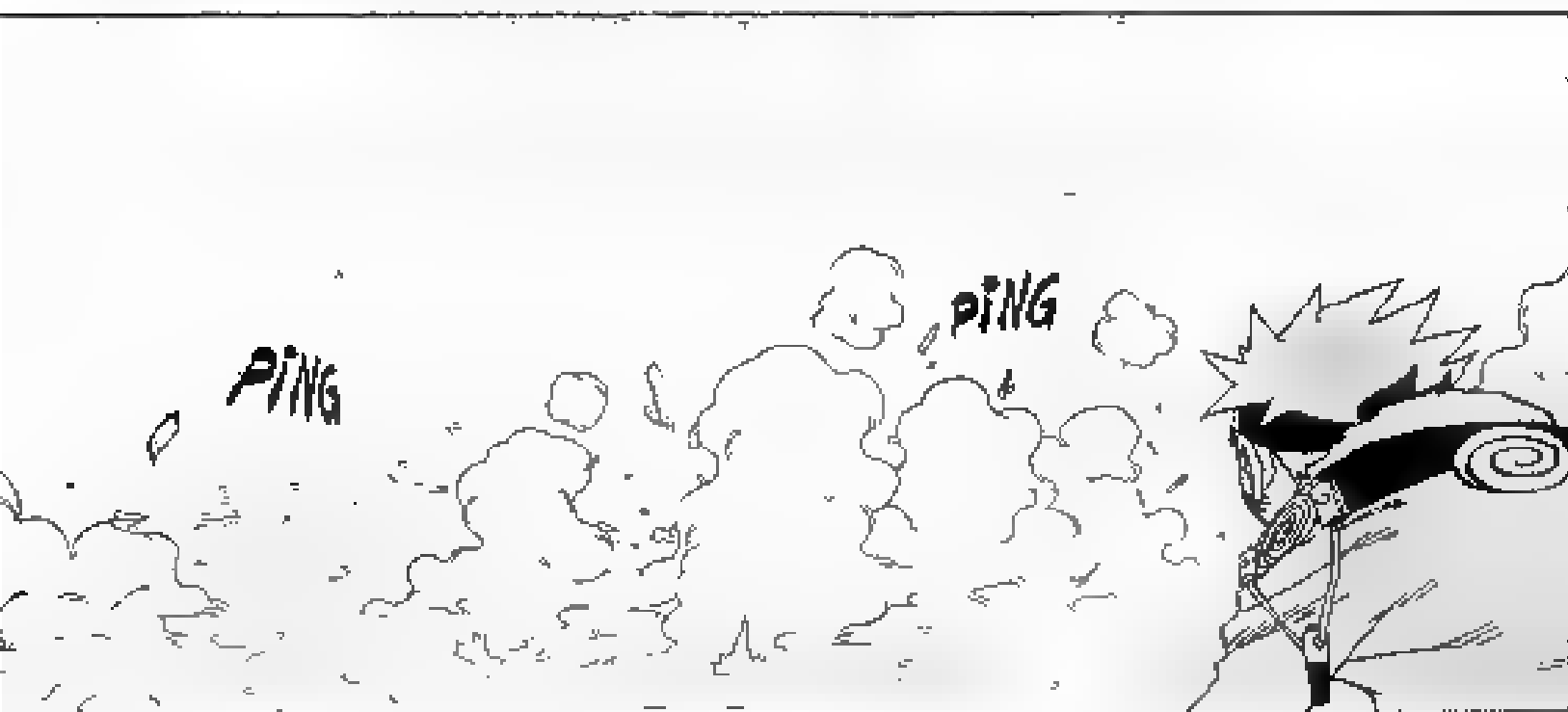
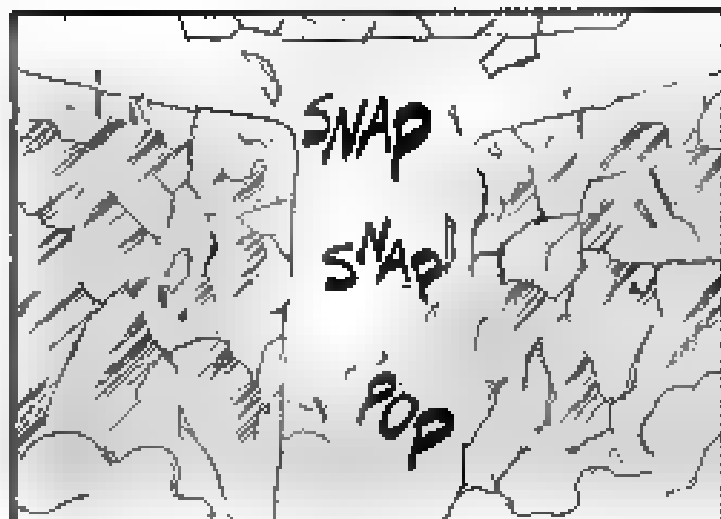
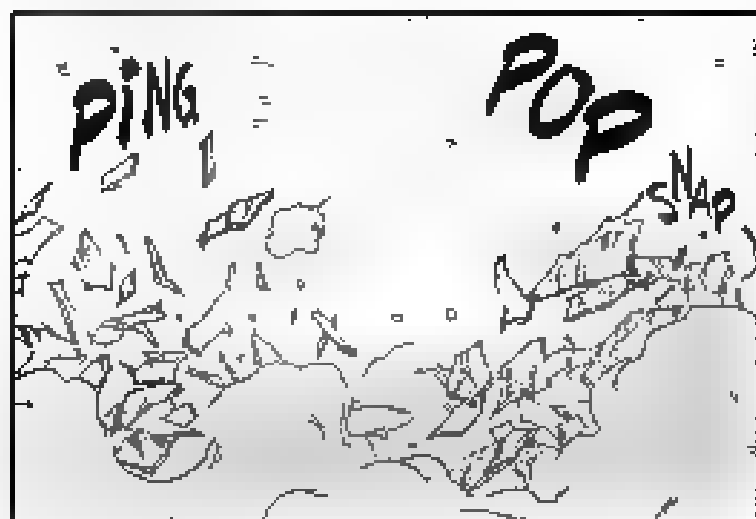
















MASTER
ZABUZA...

PING

KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S FIRST MANGA REJECT SPECIAL!

THE CHARACTER DESIGNS TO THE LEFT ARE FROM A FAILED PROJECT OF MINE CALLED "WANDERING DETOUR" THAT I CAME UP WITH RIGHT AFTER I WON THE KOP-STEP STAR AWARD.

THE STORY IS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KID NAMED AKIRA AND HIS FRIENDS KATCHIN AND KAORU FIND A WALLET ON THE WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL, AND OF ALL OF THE TROUBLE THAT ENSUES WHEN THE THREE OF THEM DECIDE TO KEEP THE MONEY THAT THEY FIND AND SPEND IT ON THEMSELVES. MAYBE IT WAS TOO HARD TO FOLLOW, OR SIMPLY TOO DOWN-TO-EARTH FOR A BOYS' ADVENTURE MAGAZINE... BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, IT WAS SUMMARILY REJECTED.

IT WAS MY FIRST REJECTION EVER, BUT I WAS SUCH A KID BACK THEN, EVEN GETTING MY FIRST REJECTION SEEMED LIKE A BIG DEAL, ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL MILESTONE I'D PASSED. FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I'D BEEN READING OTHER MANGA CARTOONISTS' TALES OF WOE ABOUT THE REJECTIONS THEY'D GOTTEN, AND I'D BEEN FEELING A LITTLE LEFT OUT. WITH "WANDERING DETOUR," I WAS FINALLY IN THE CLUB! I EVEN BRAGGED ABOUT IT A LITTLE. LIKE I SAID, I WAS A KID THEN. NOW, I'M A TRUE PROFESSIONAL, AND I AGREE WITH MY FRIENDS: "REJECTION SUCKS!" (LAUGHTER)



AKIRA



YOUICHI

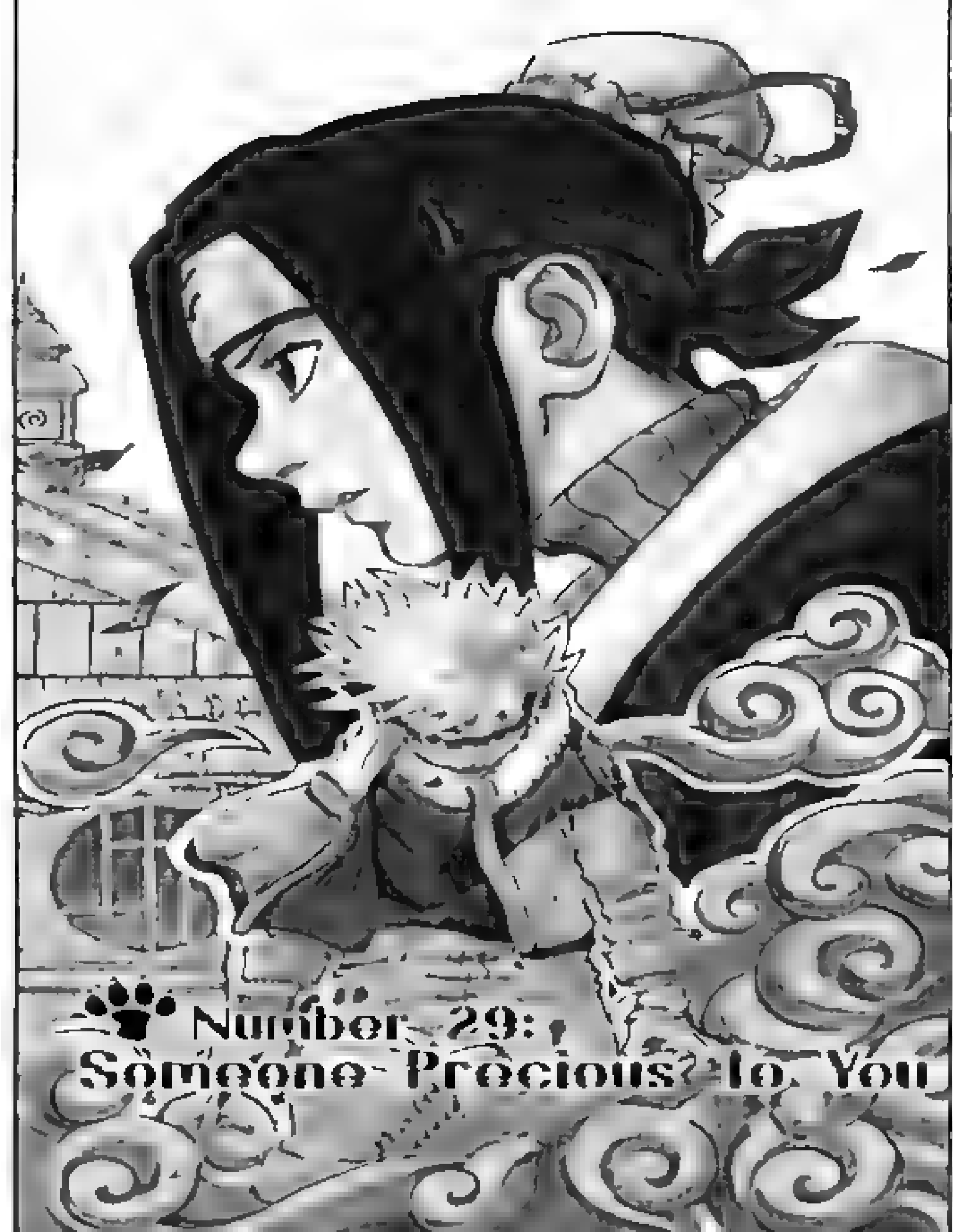


KAORU KATCHIN

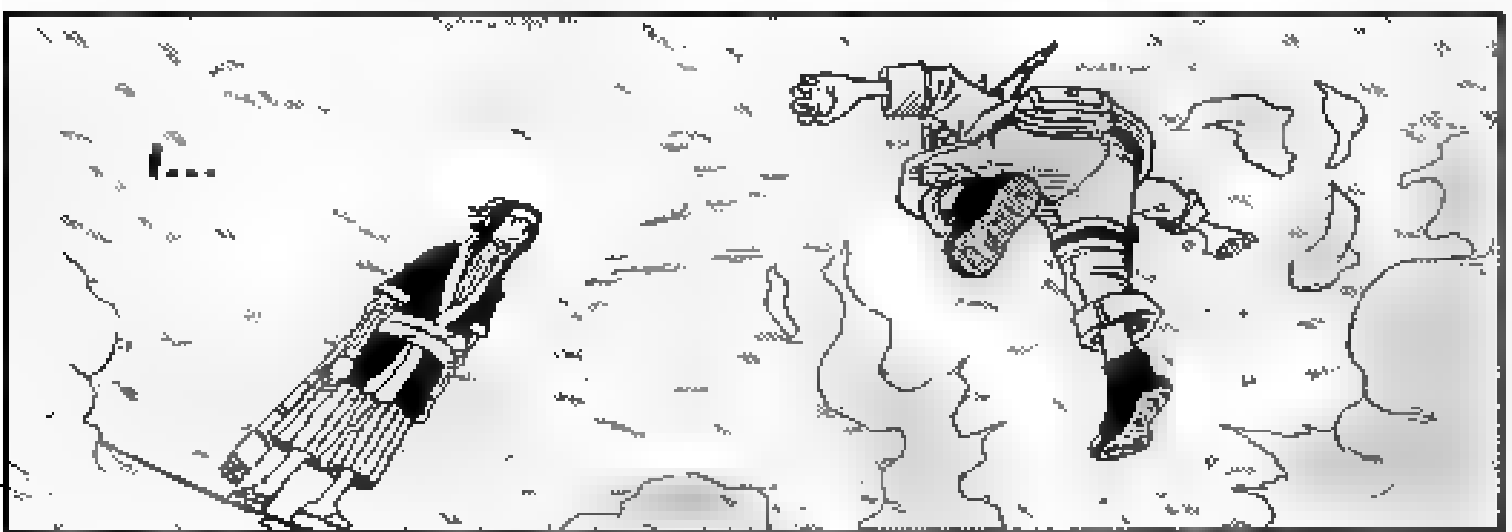
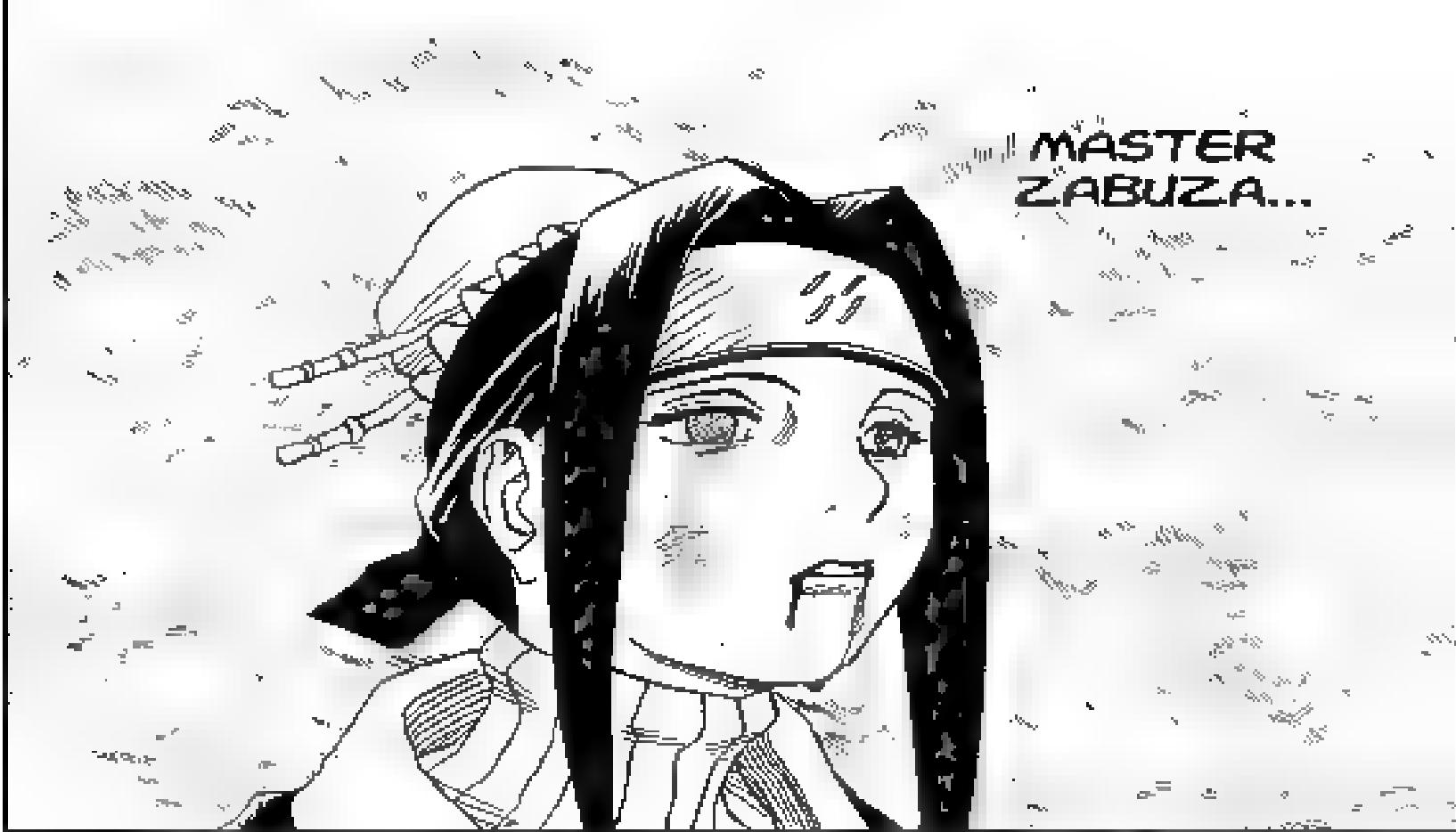


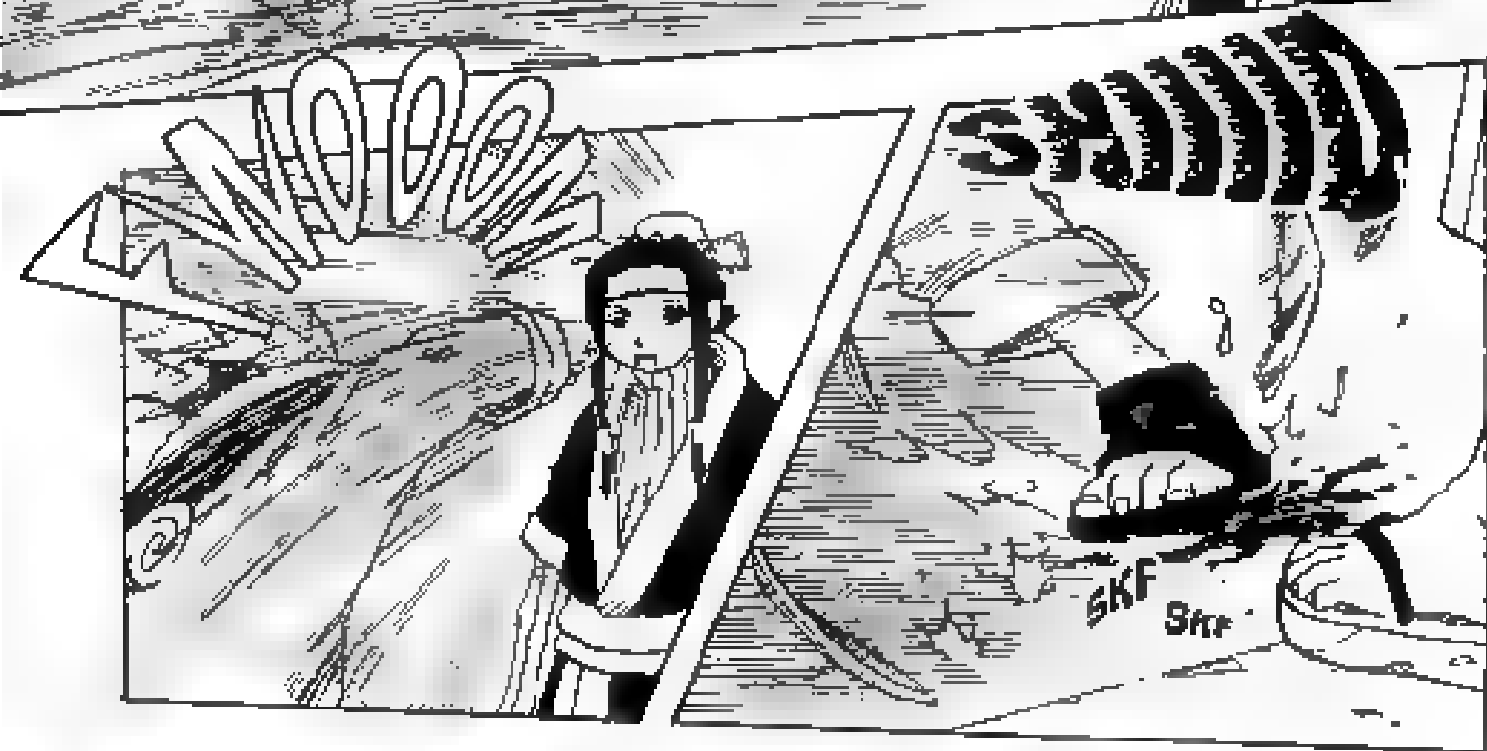
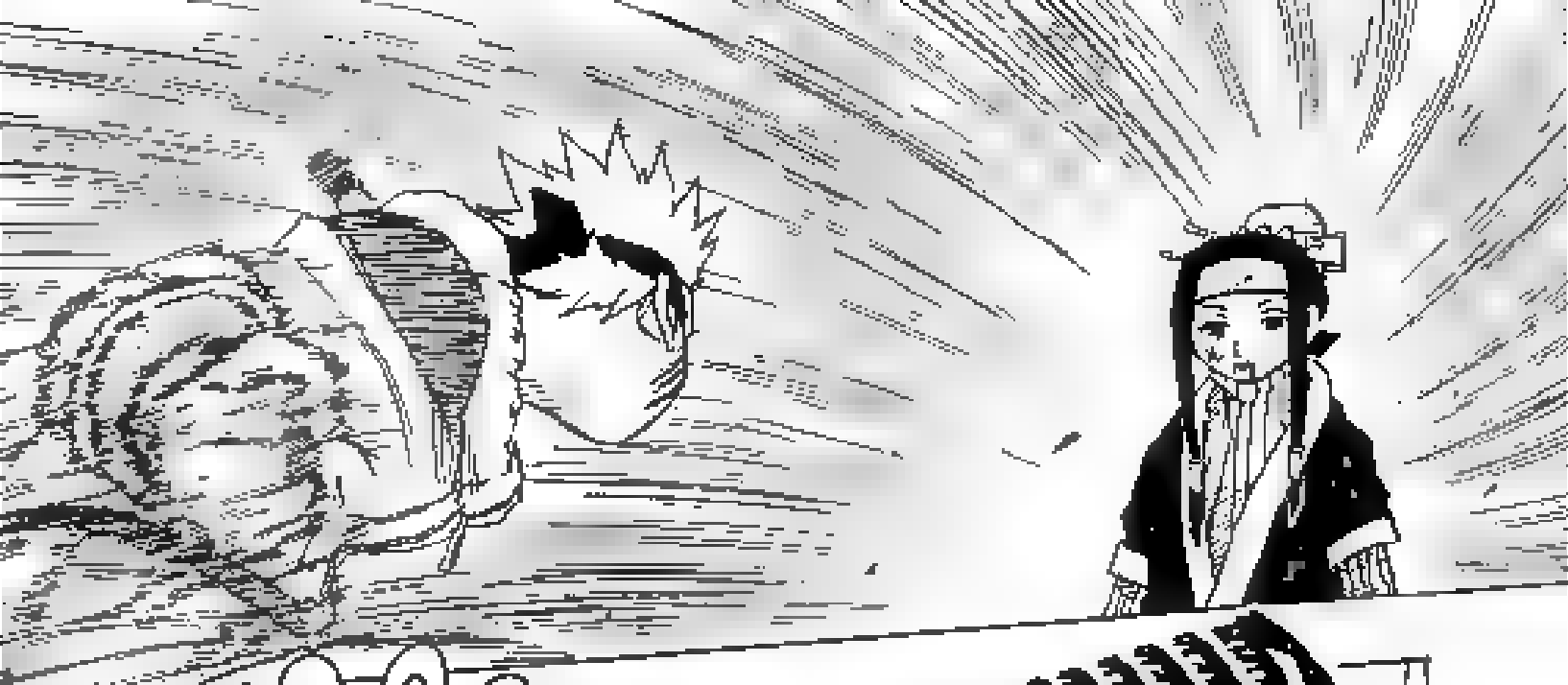
YUMI

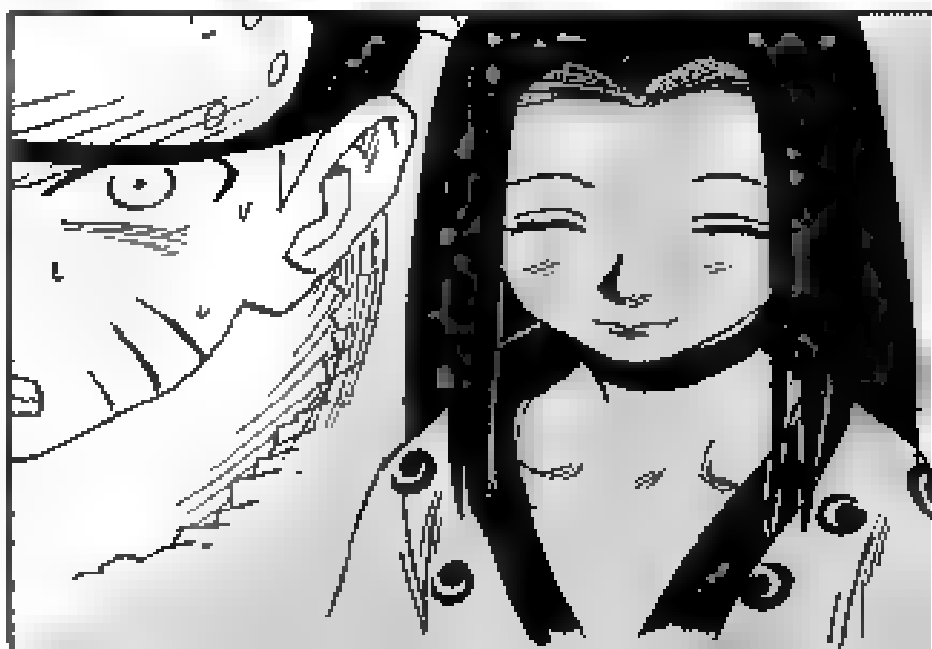
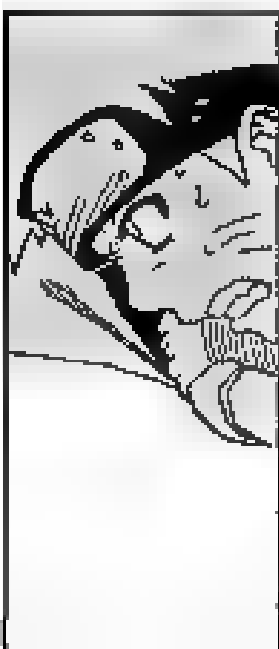
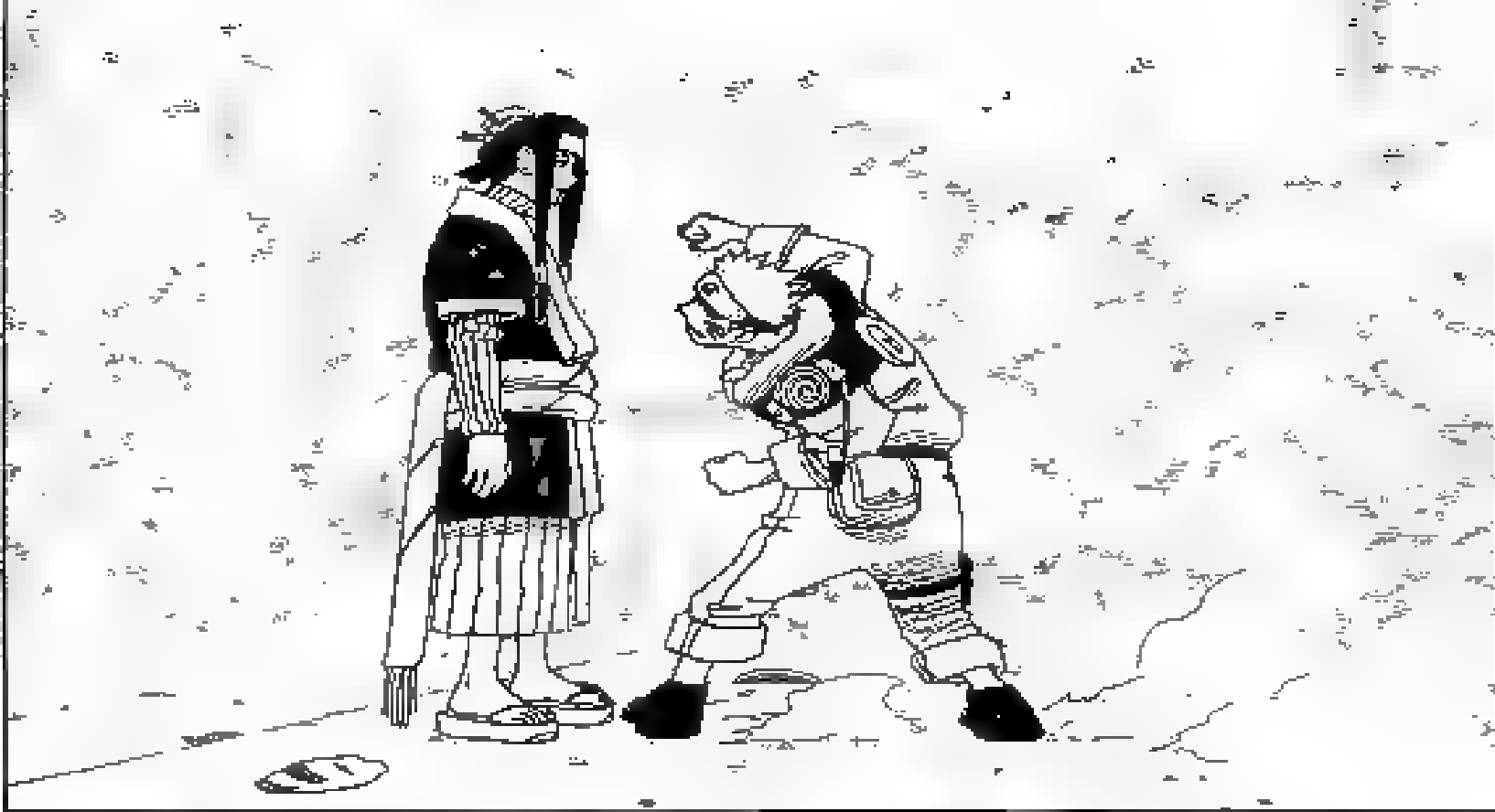


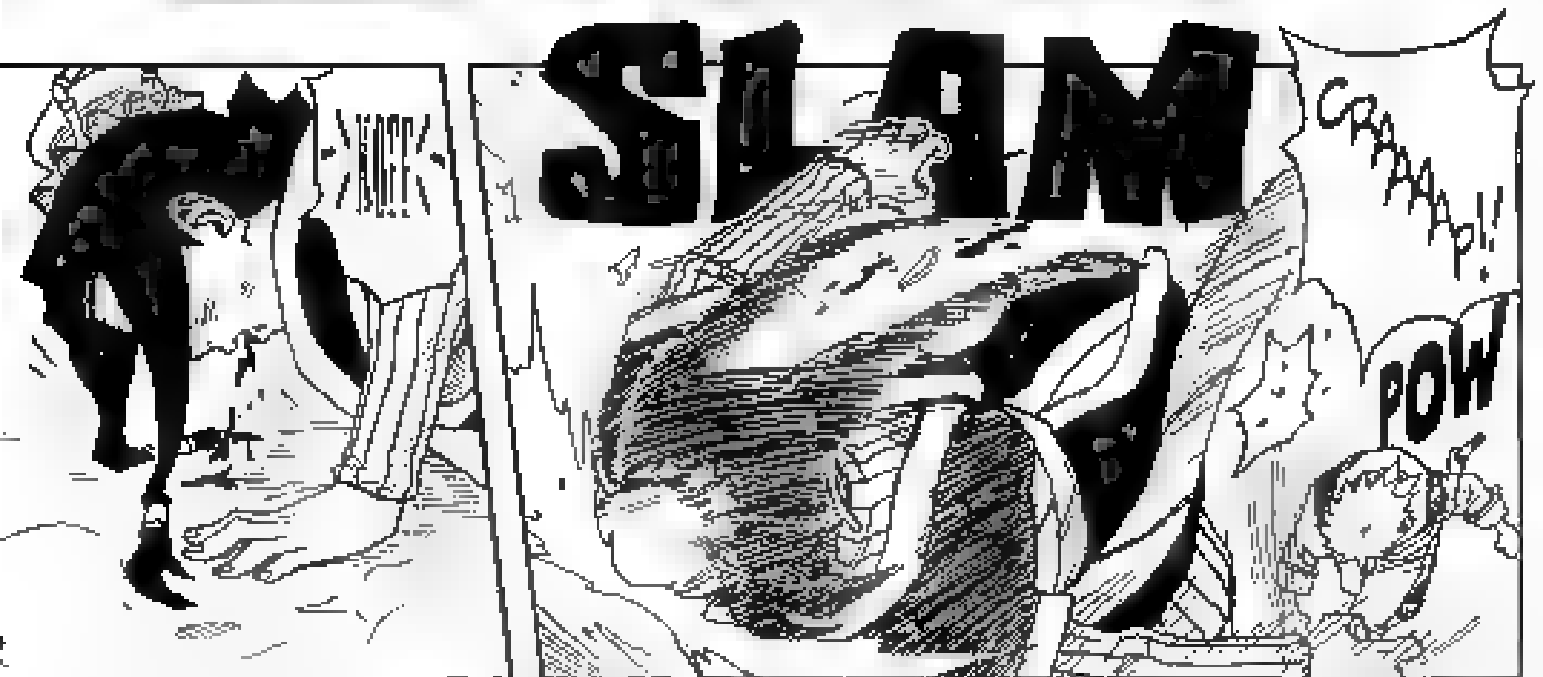


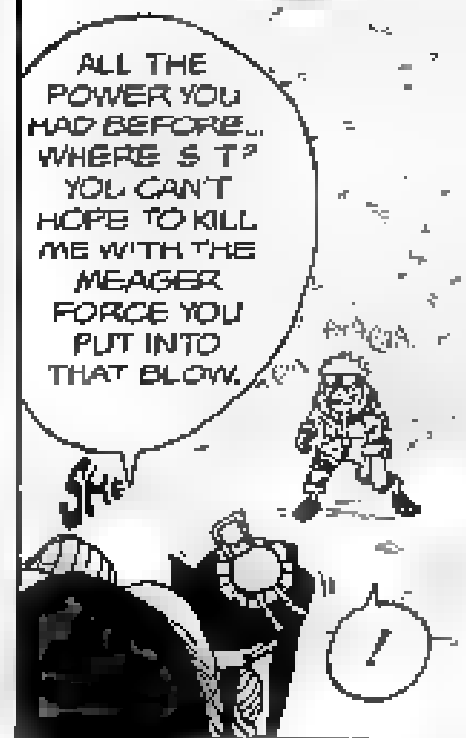
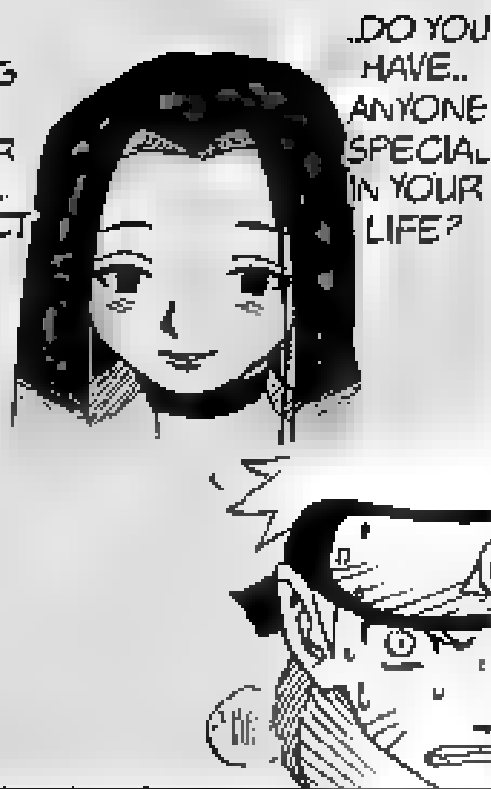
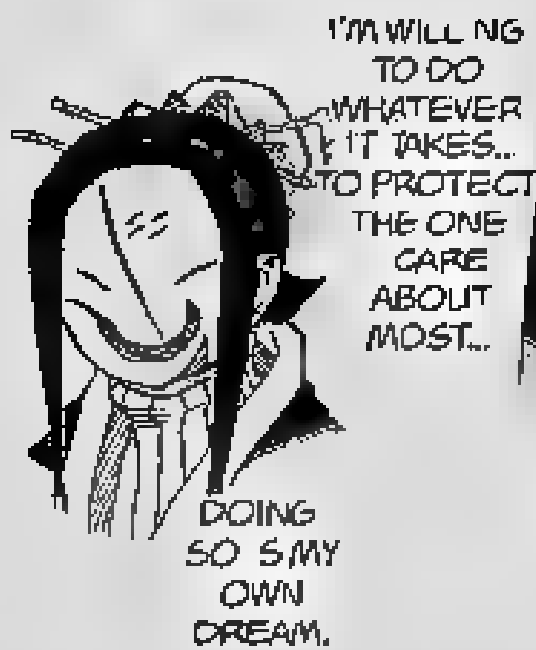
 Number 29:
Someone Precious to You

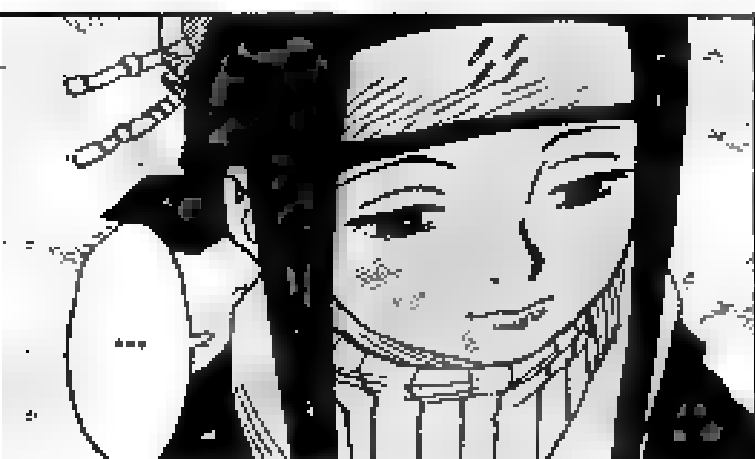
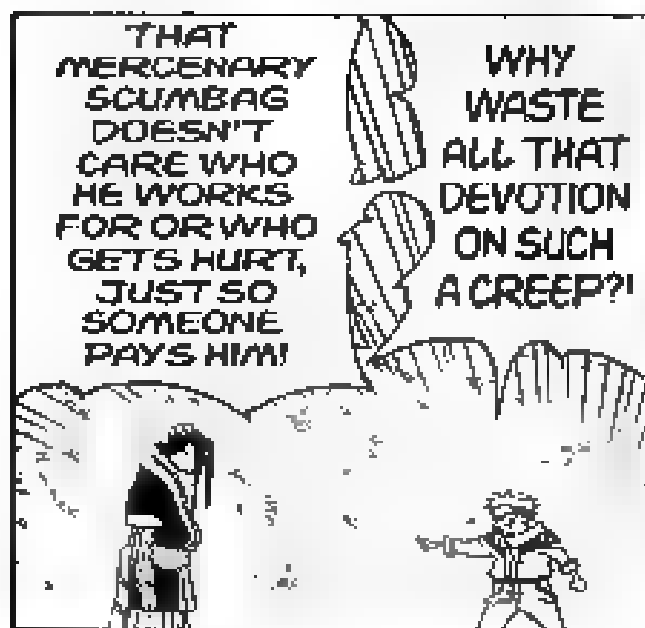


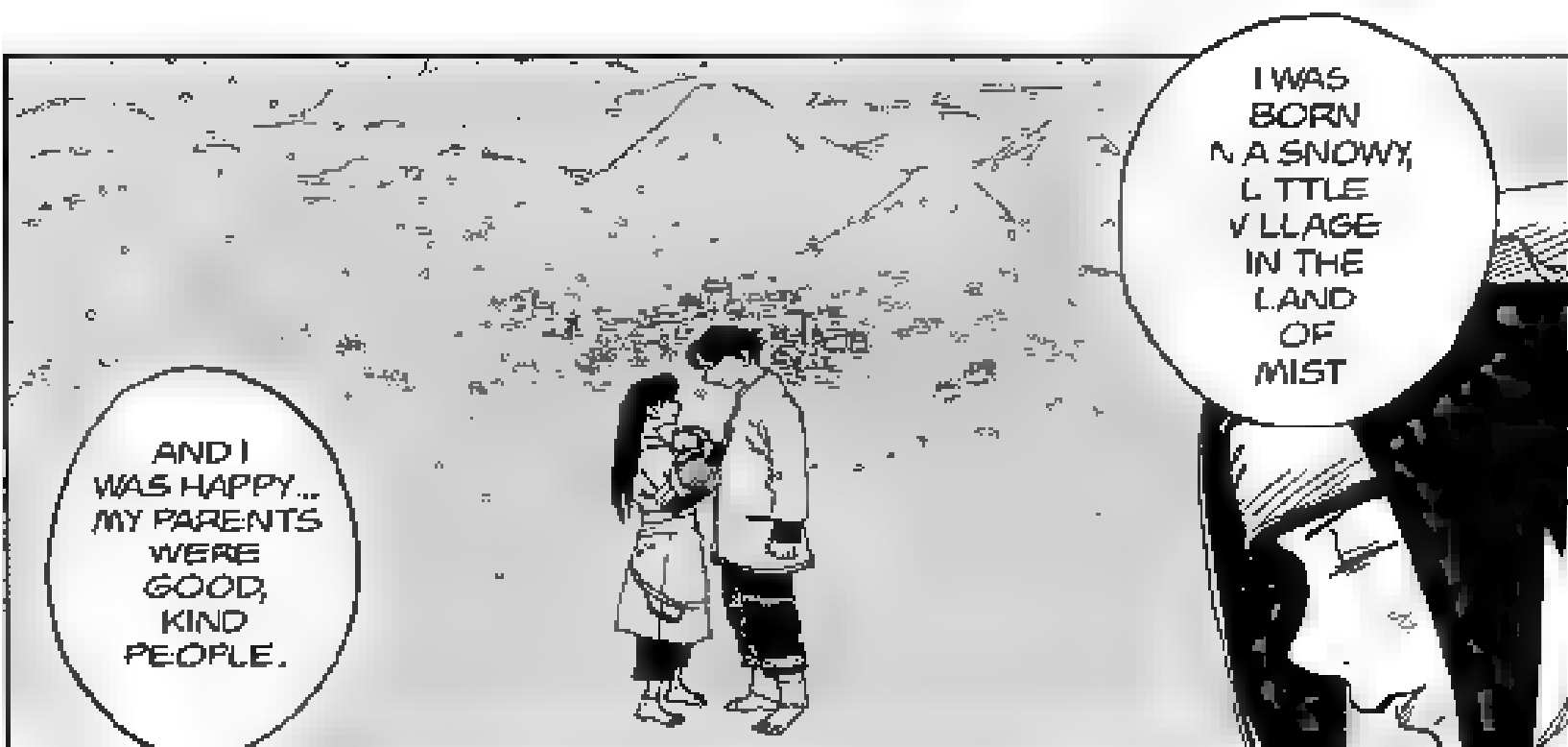
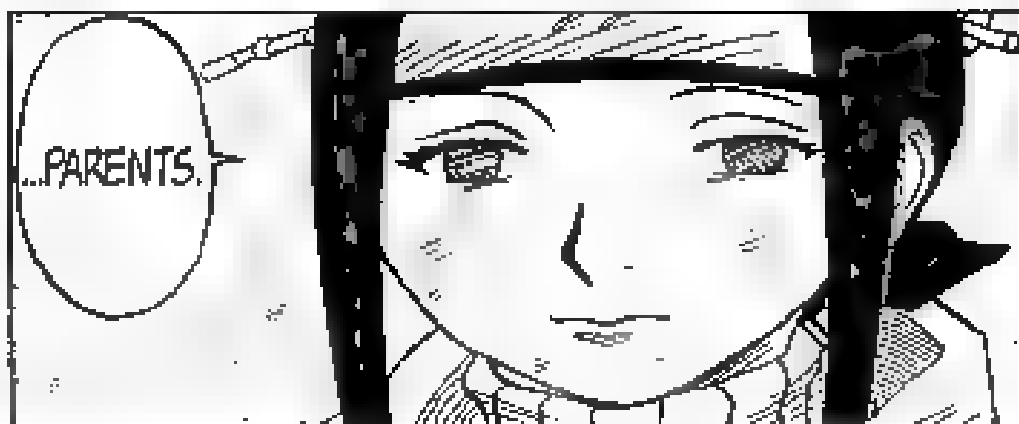
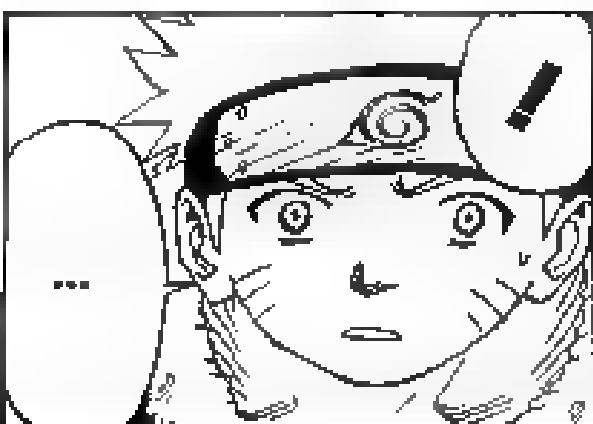


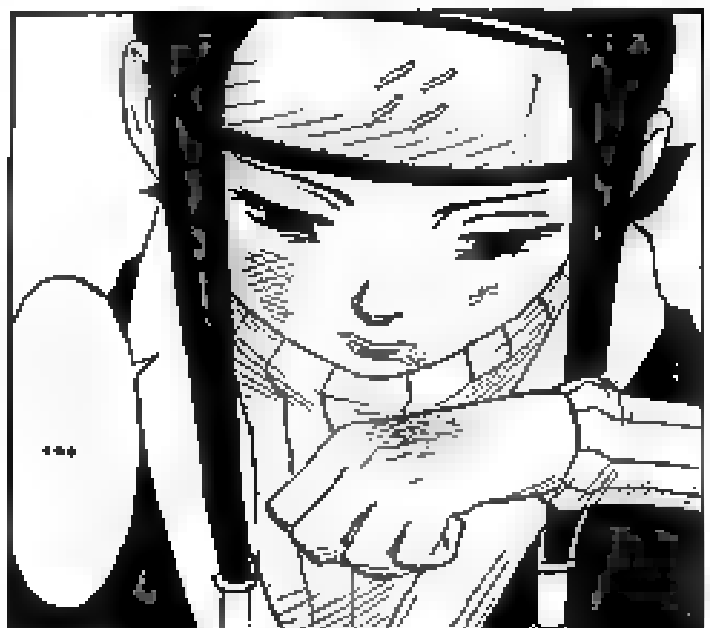
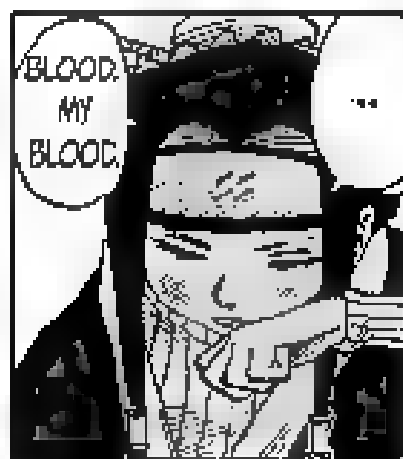












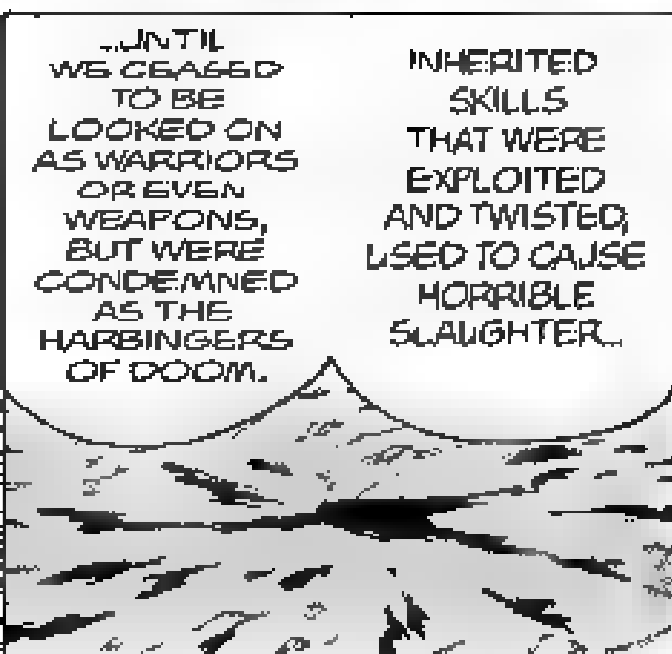


WHY~?



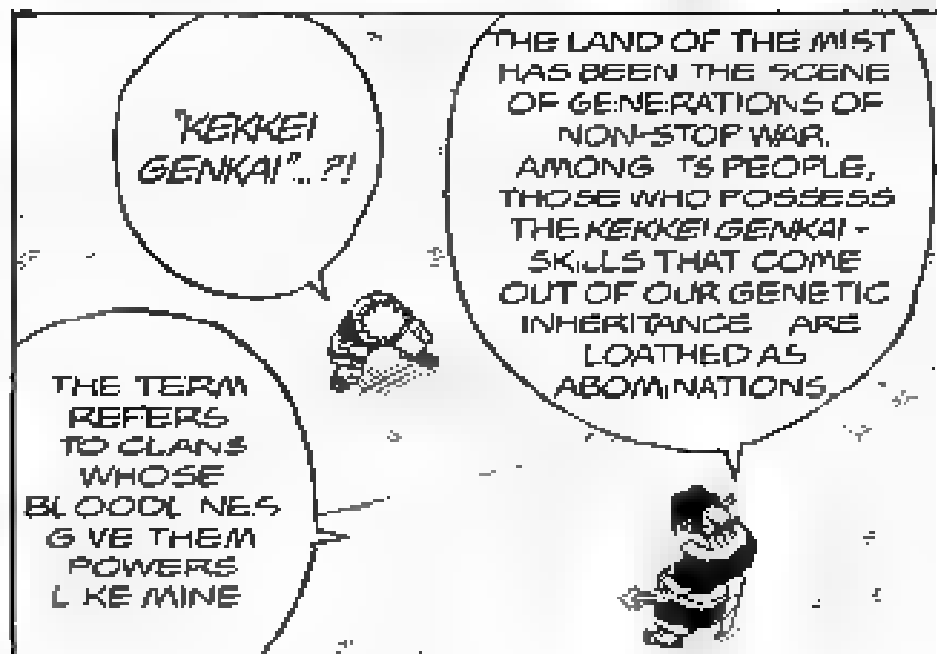
...AND
TRIED
TO
KILL
ME.

MY
FATHER
KILLED
MY
MOTHER.



...UNTIL
WE CEASED
TO BE
LOOKED ON
AS WARRIORS
OR EVEN
WEAPONS,
BUT WERE
CONDEMNED
AS THE
HARBINGERS
OF DOOM.

INHERITED
SKILLS
THAT WERE
EXPLOITED
AND TWISTED,
USED TO CAUSE
HORRIBLE
SLAUGHTER.



"KEKKEI
GENKAI"... ?!

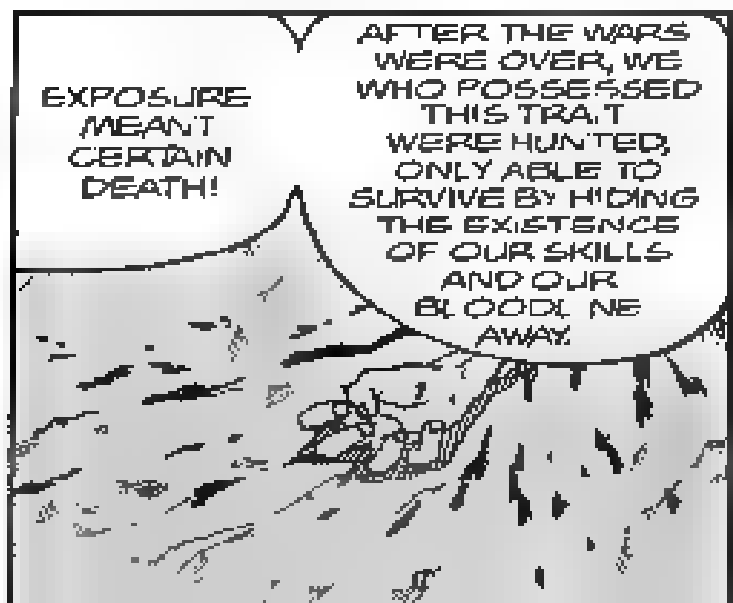
THE TERM
REFERS
TO CLANS
WHOSE
BLOODLINES
GIVE THEM
POWERS
LIKE MINE

THE LAND OF THE MIST
HAS BEEN THE SCENE
OF GENERATIONS OF
NON-STOP WAR.
AMONG TS PEOPLE,
THOSE WHO POSSESS
THE KEKKEI GENKAI -
SKILLS THAT COME
OUT OF OUR GENETIC
INHERITANCE ARE
LOATHED AS
ABOMINATIONS.



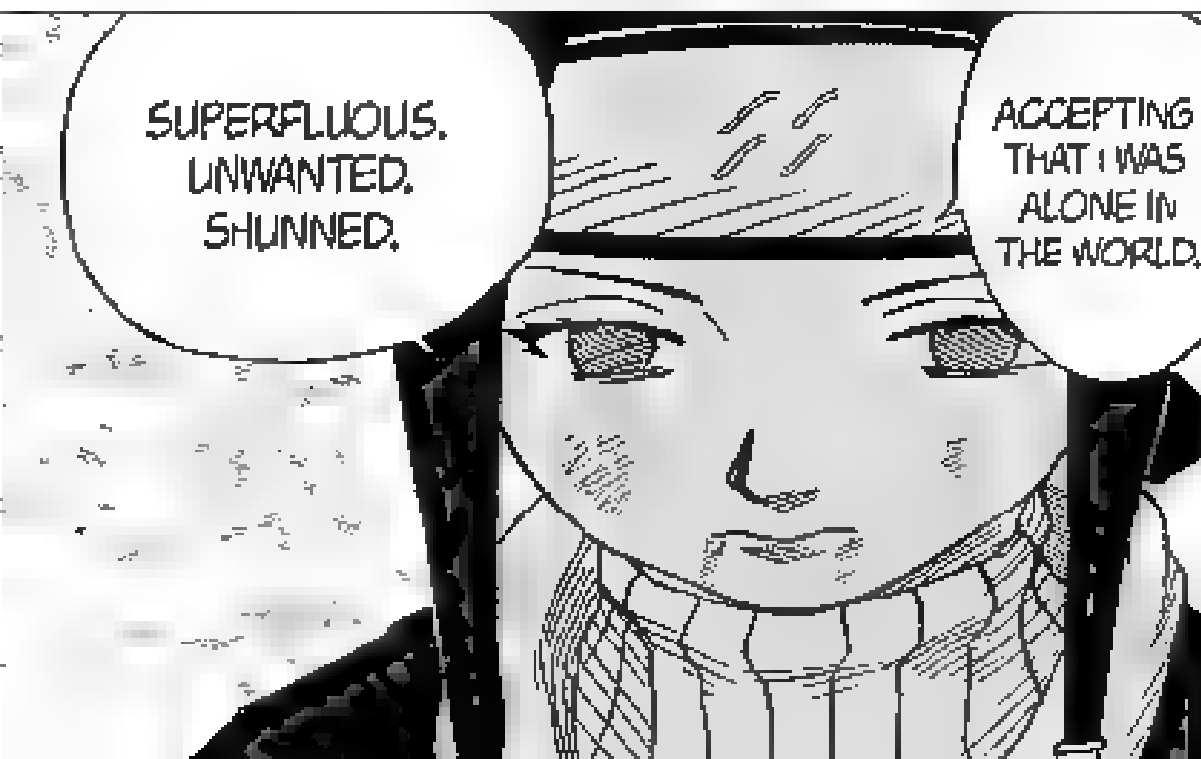
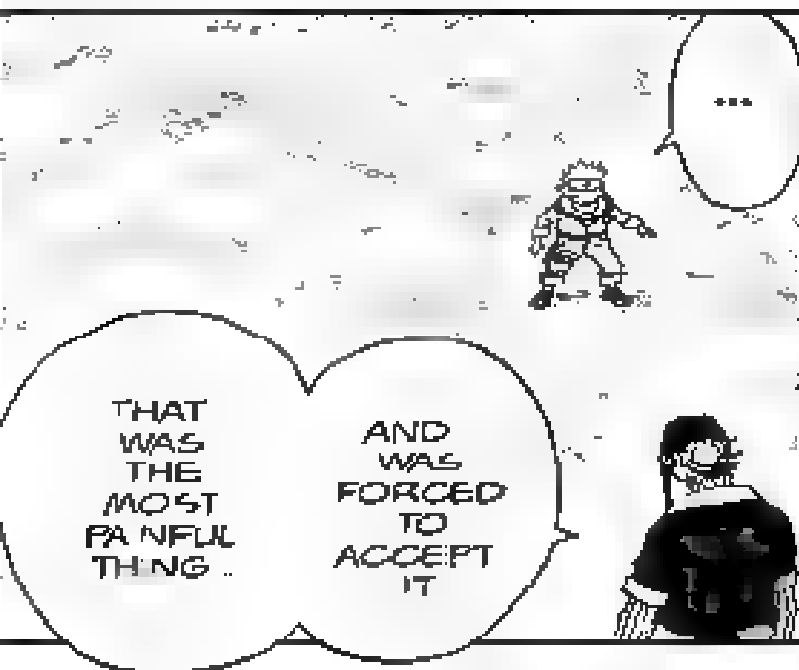
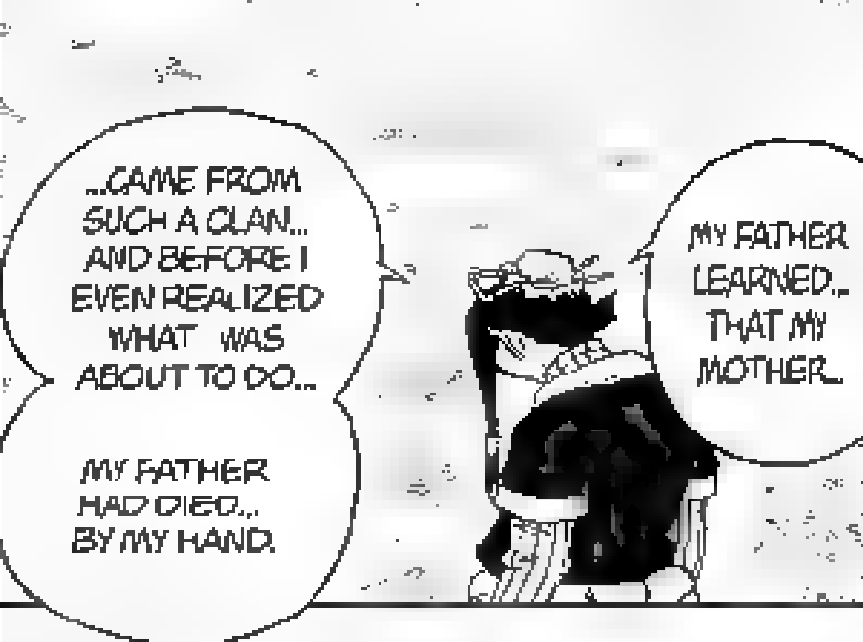
WE ARE
SPECIAL.
WE ARE
POWERFUL.
AND WE
ARE FEARED.

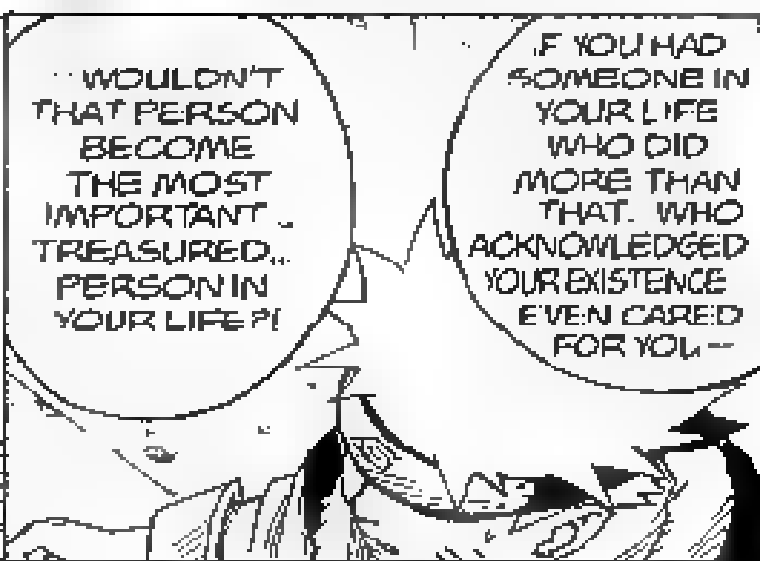
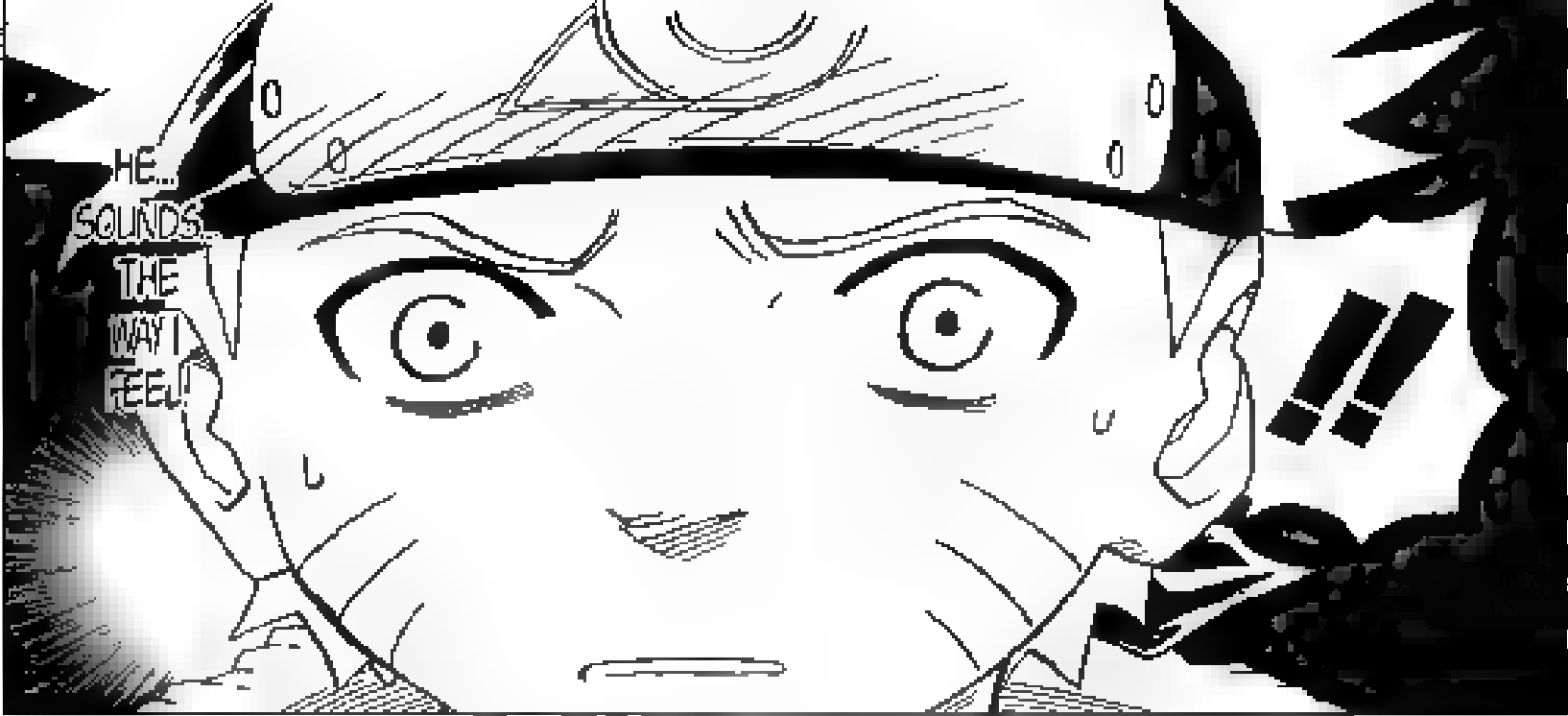
I'M SURE THE
BOY I KILLED,
WHO SHARED
THAT SKILL,
MUST ALSO
HAVE GROWN
UP KNOWING
THE PAIN OF
WHICH I SPEAK.

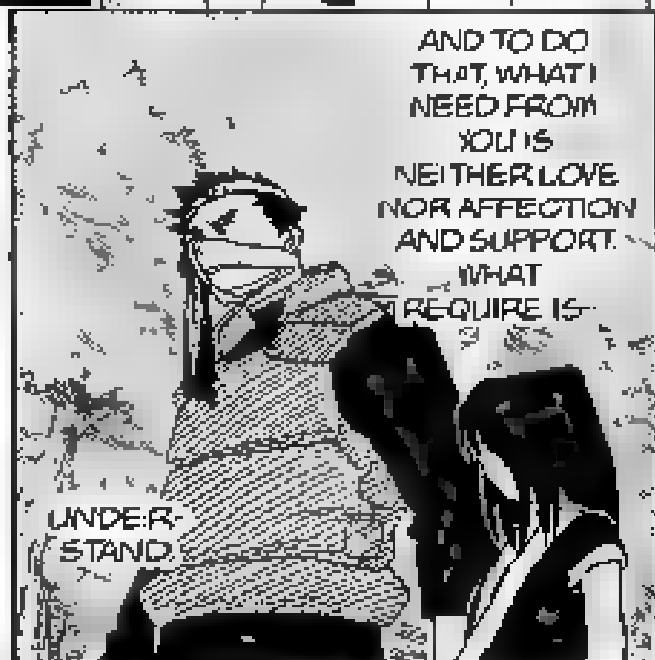


EXPOSURE
MEANT
CERTAIN
DEATH!

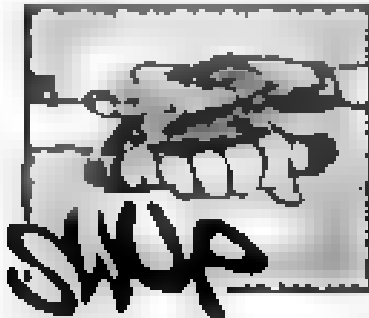
AFTER THE WARS
WERE OVER, WE
WHO POSSESSED
THIS TRAIT
WERE HUNTED,
ONLY ABLE TO
SURVIVE BY HIDING
THE EXISTENCE
OF OUR SKILLS
AND OUR
BLOODLINE
AWAY.











okup



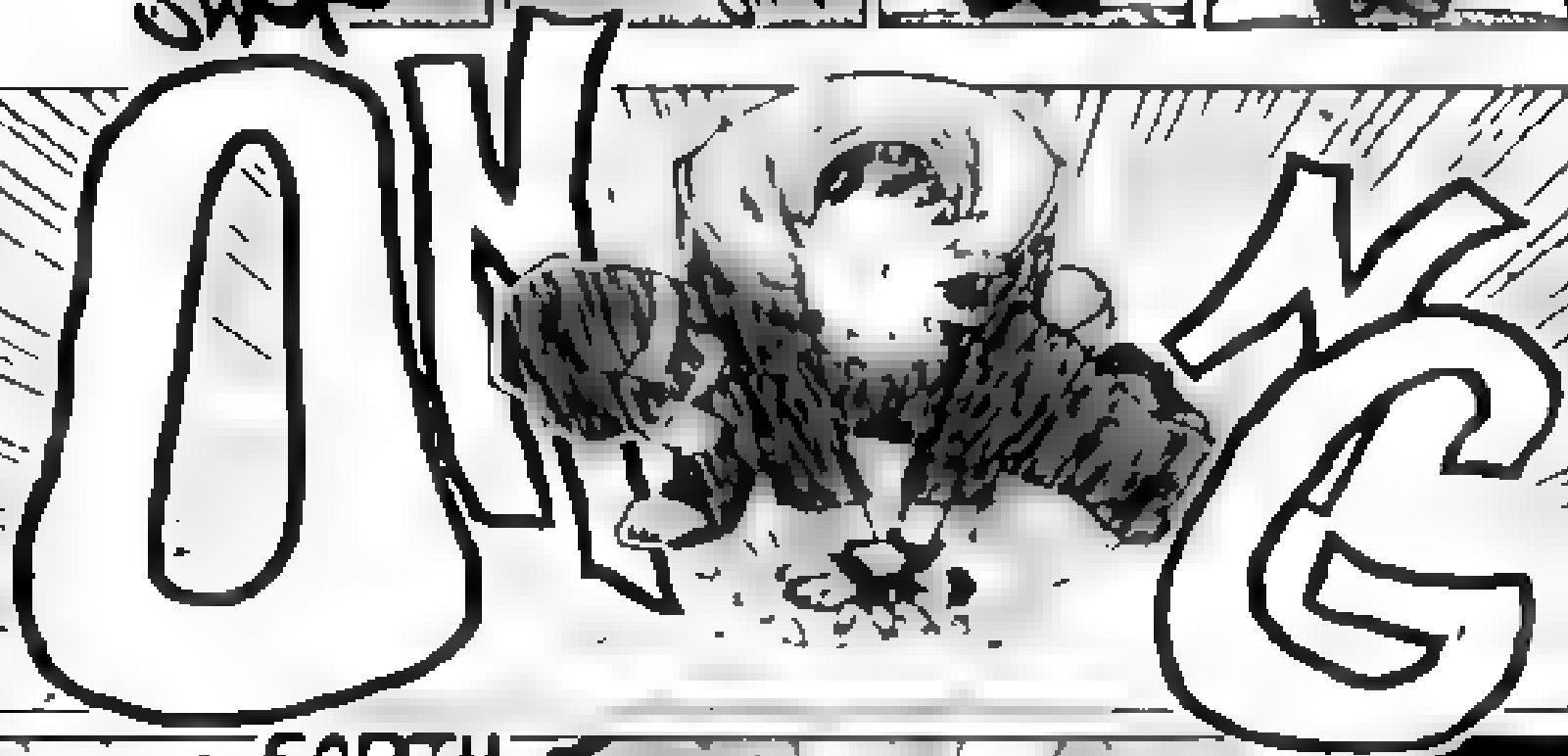
okup



okup



okup



EARTH
STYLE!
FANGED
VENGEANCE
TECHNIQUE!

SHINOBI
CONJURATION!



YOU
CAN'T
EVEN
TELL
WHERE I
TRULY
AM!!!

THIS
POSTURING
WILL GET
YOU NOWHERE,
KAKASH!

YOU
ARE
COMPLETELY
ENMESHED
IN MY
SPELL!

WHILE I,
ON THE
OTHER HAND,
KNOW EXACTLY
WHERE YOU
ARE AND
EXACTLY
HOW TO
DEFEAT
YOU!!

NO!!!!

ONGONGONG

Eh??







MY
LITTLE
NINJA
PUPS
COULDN'T
MISS IT!

IT'S WHY
I WENT
OUT OF MY
WAY TO
BLEED
A BIT
DURING
BOTH OF
OUR
EARLIER
ENCOUNTERS.

THE SMELL
OF MY
BLOOD
IS ALL
OVER YOU
AND YOUR
WEAPONS,
SO THICK...

JHA...



UGH...

SO,
WHO'S
ENMESHED
IN
WHOSE
SPELL
NOW?

EVERY
DOG
HAS HIS
NOSE...
AND
THEY
ALL KNOW
**YOU
STINK.**



YOUR
FUTURE
IS
DEATH.

THE
FOG IS
LIFTING.
I CAN SEE
YOUR
FUTURE...



THE DESIGN TO THE LEFT IS FROM ANOTHER FLOP - A MANGA CALLED "ASIAN PUNK", THAT WAS RESOUNDINGLY REJECTED AT EVERY TURN. TO BE FRANK, THE PREMISE WAS NOT COINCIDENTALLY—KINDA LIKE "GHOSTBLASTERS."

THE MAIN CHARACTER WAS A KID WITH AN AXE TAKING ON AN EVIL FENG-SHUI MASTER WHO COULD SUMMON AND CONTROL EVIL SPIRITS... AND THE MAIN CHARACTER WASN'T REALLY HUMAN HIMSELF, BUT HAD BEEN CREATED BY SOME GREATER POWER. THERE WAS MORE, BUT WE DON'T NEED TO GO INTO IT HERE.

THE THING IS, WITH THAT STORY, MY PRIZE-WINNING SERIES KARAKUR, AND NARUTO, IT OCCURS ME TO ME THAT MY HEROES ARE ALWAYS THESE YOUNG GUYS. I GUESS I'M JUST A SUCKER FOR BOYS' ADVENTURE TALES!



 **Number 30: Your Future is...!!**



I'VE
HAD
ENOUGH
OF
YOUR
BLUFFS.

YOU
SAY
MY
FUTURE
IS
DEATH...?



THERE'S
NO
WAY
OUT
FACE
IT.

WHO'S
BLUFFING
NOW?

YOU'RE
GOING
TO
DIE



YOU'VE
HAD
YOUR
FUN.

ZABUZA...

WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THE FAILED COUP YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS STAGED, AND ABOUT THE ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE MIZUKAGE, THE WATER SHADOW, LEADER OF YOUR PEOPLE.

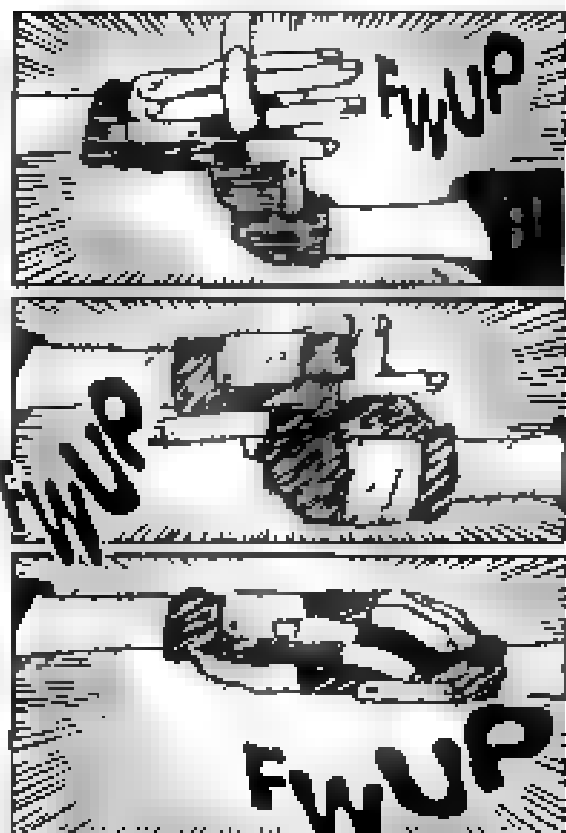
THE DAY YOU DESERTED THE LAND OF THE MIST AND BECAME A TURNCOAT AND RENEGADE, YOUR NAME AND YOUR ACTIONS WERE REPORTED TO US AT KONOHGA VILLAGE.

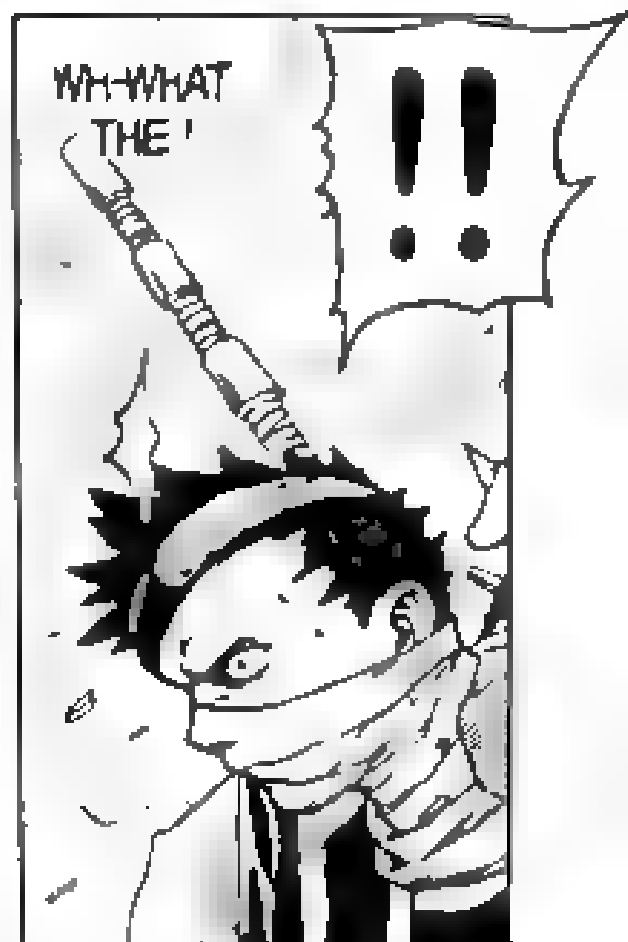
YOU SCHEMED YOUR SCHEMES...

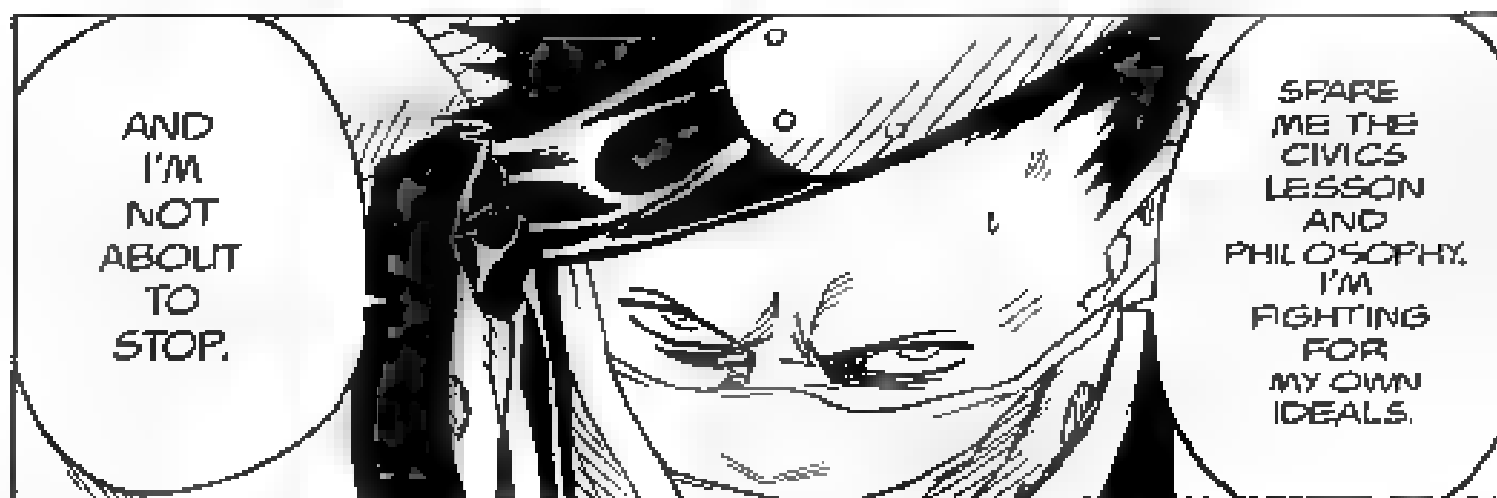
...

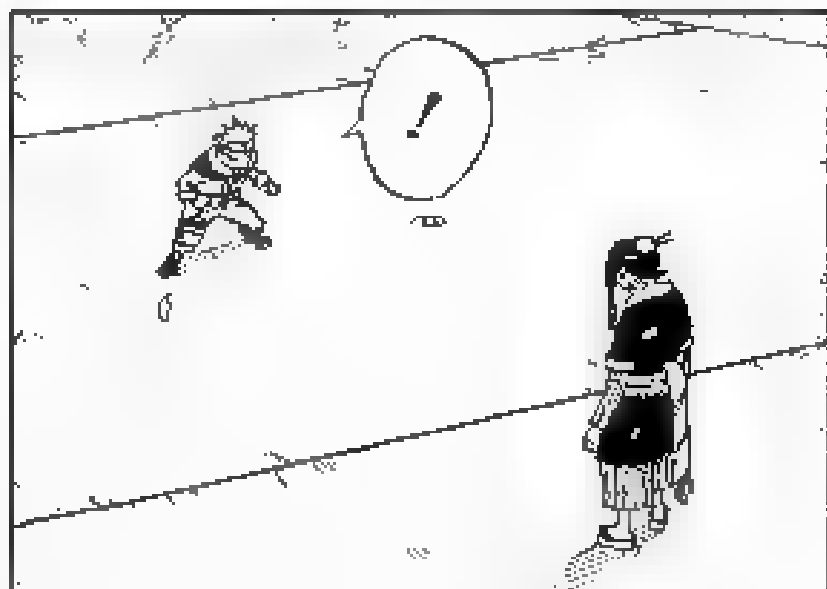
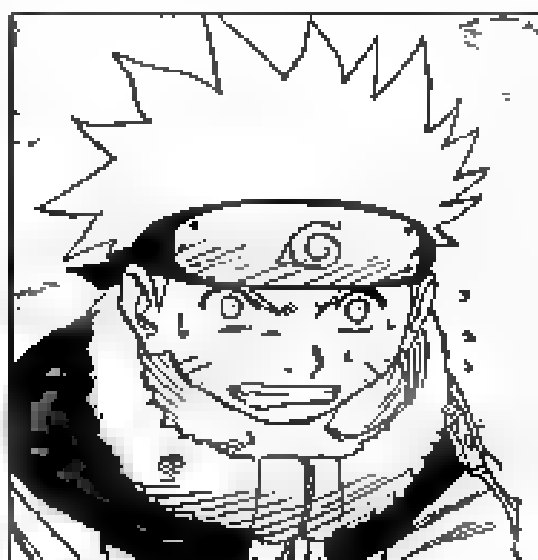
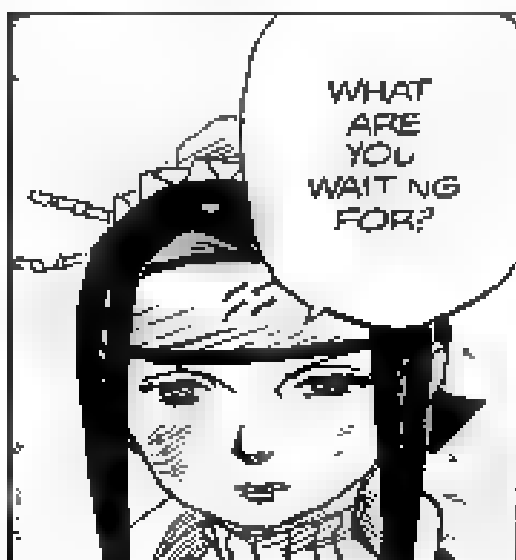
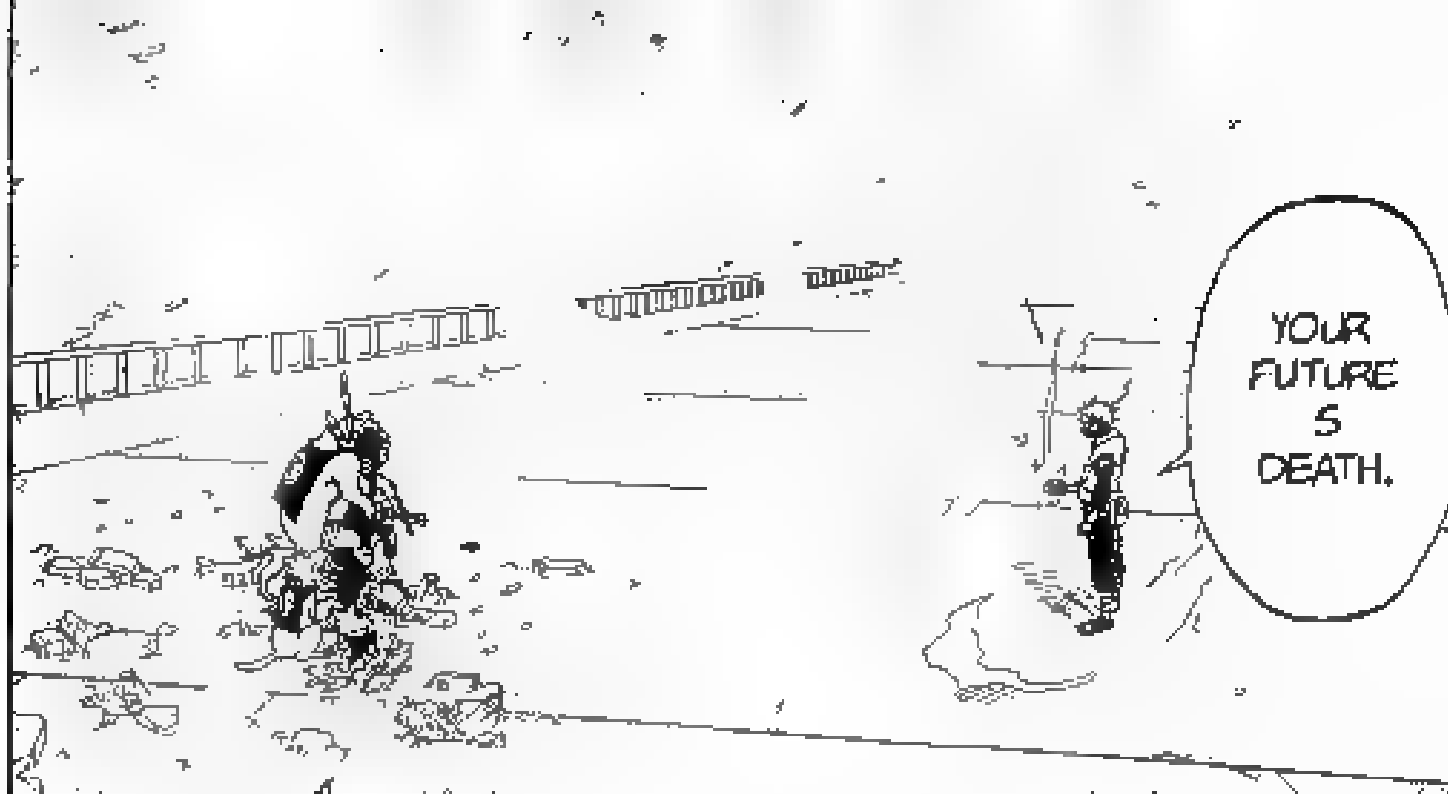
IT'S WHY YOU'D STOOP TO WORK FOR A PARASITE LIKE GATB.

YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A SECOND ATTEMPT, AND BARELY STAYING A JUMP AHEAD OF THE SHINOBI HUNTERS... WHICH IS WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE.









BUT
WANTING
TO DIE JUST
'CAUSE
SOMEONE
BEAT YOU
IS CRAZY!!



WHAT IS
WITH YOU?
YOU'RE USED
TO BEING
THE TOUGHEST.
YOU DON'T
LIKE TO LOSE.
I GET THAT!

YOUR
BOSS
MUST LIKE
YOU FOR
MORE
THAN JUST
THAT.
RIGHT?
DOESN'T
HE?



THERE'S
MORE TO
LIFE THAN
JUST
FIGHTING.
THERE'S
MORE
TO YOU!



SURELY
YOU
CAN
UNDER-
STAND...



THAT DAY
I MET YOU IN
THE FOREST
I REMEMBER
THINKING THAT
WE WERE
TWO OF
A KIND...

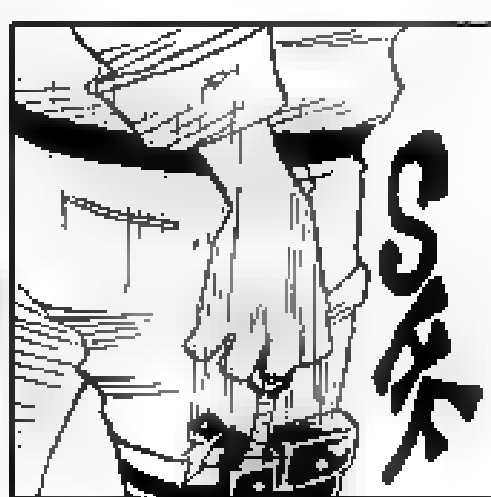
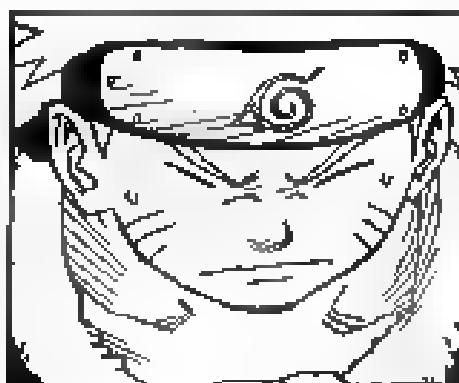
IS
THAT
THE ONLY
WAY?
NO
OTHER
OUTCOME?

IS
THAT...



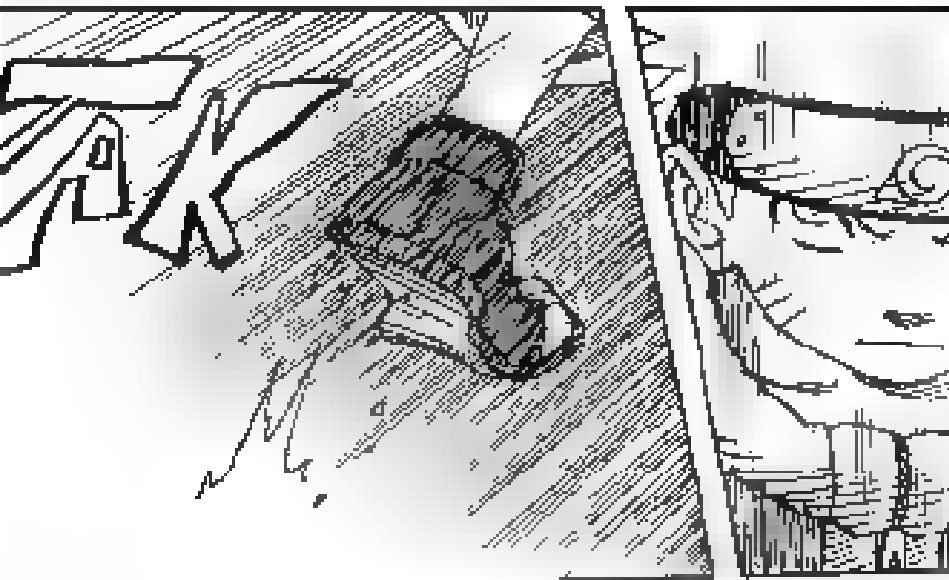
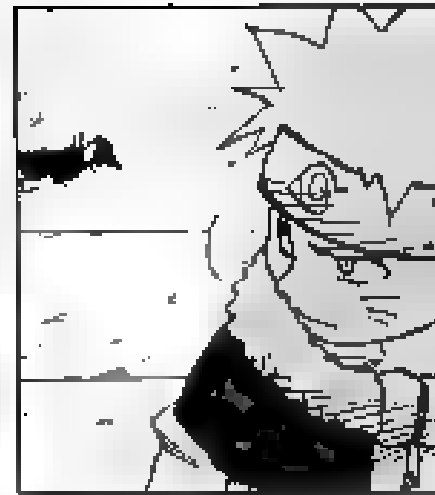
YOU'LL
HAVE TO
BLOODY
YOUR HANDS.
FORGIVE
ME FOR
THAT



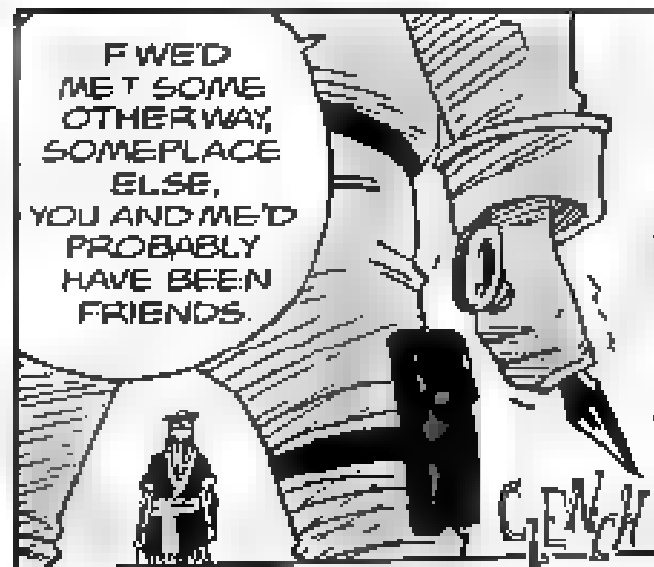


...SASUKE
HAD
A
DREAM,
TOO...

...HE...

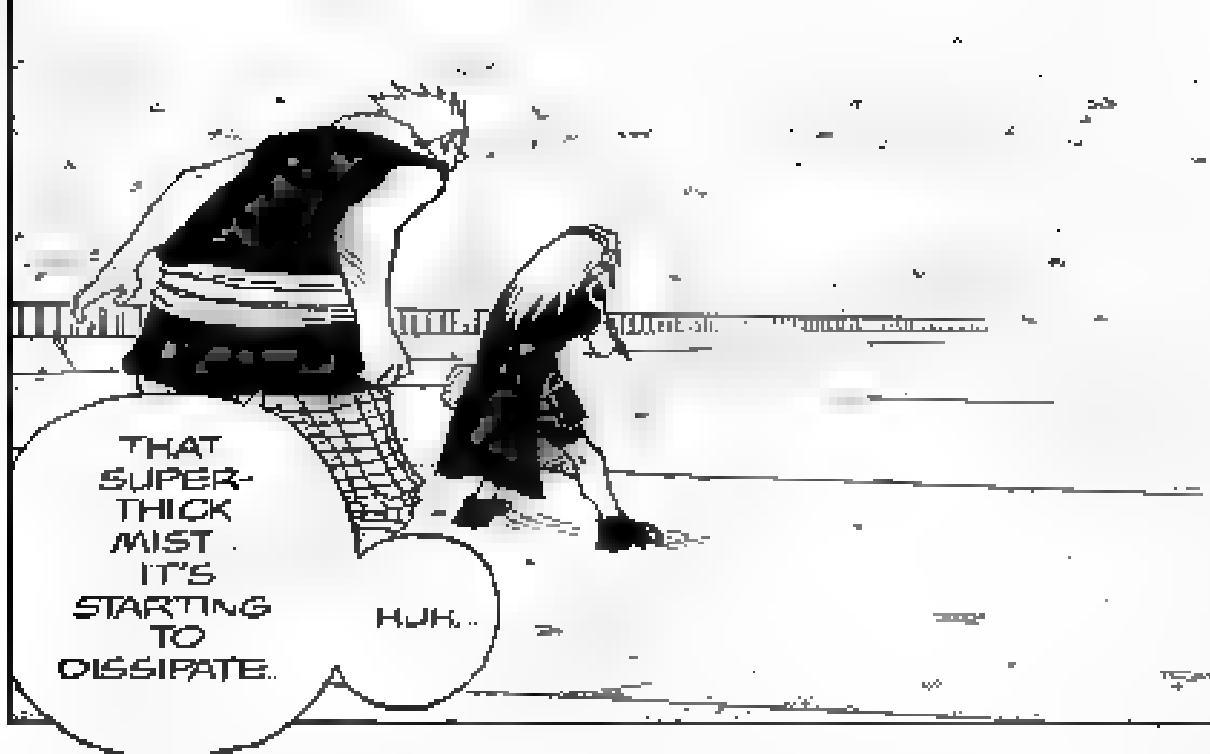


F WE'D
MET SOME
OTHERWAY,
SOMEPLACE
ELSE,
YOU AND ME'D
PROBABLY
HAVE BEEN
FRIENDS.



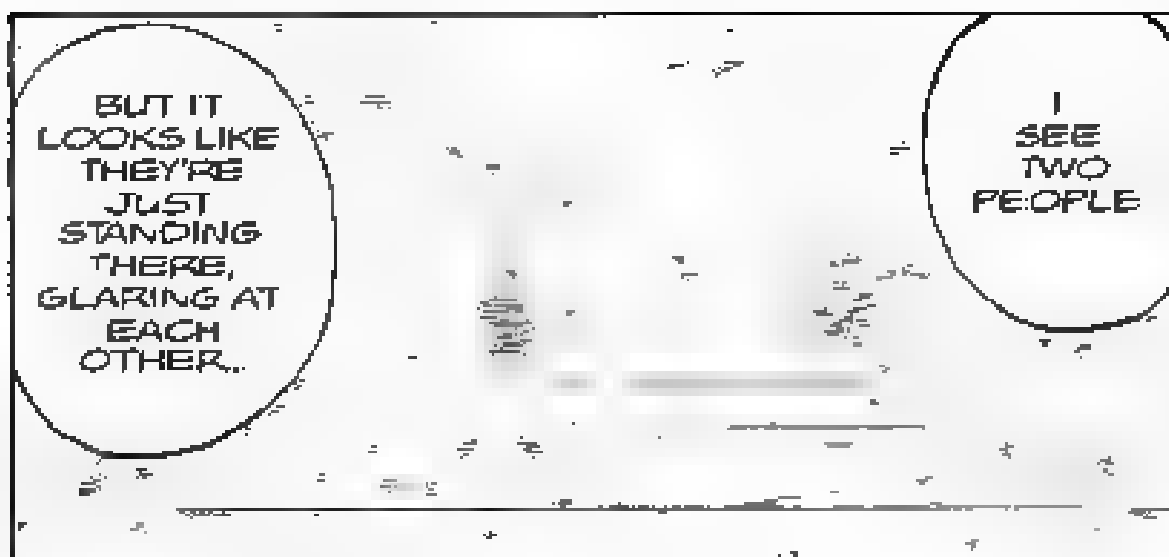
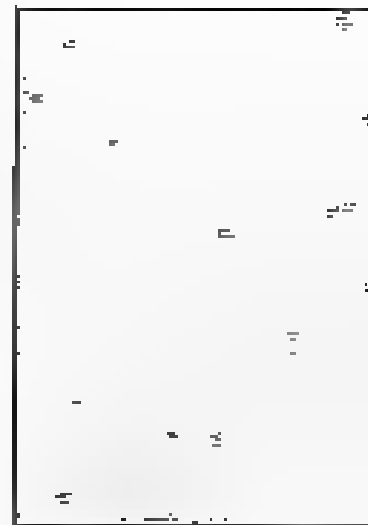
YOU'RE
GOING
TO BE
VERY
STRONG.





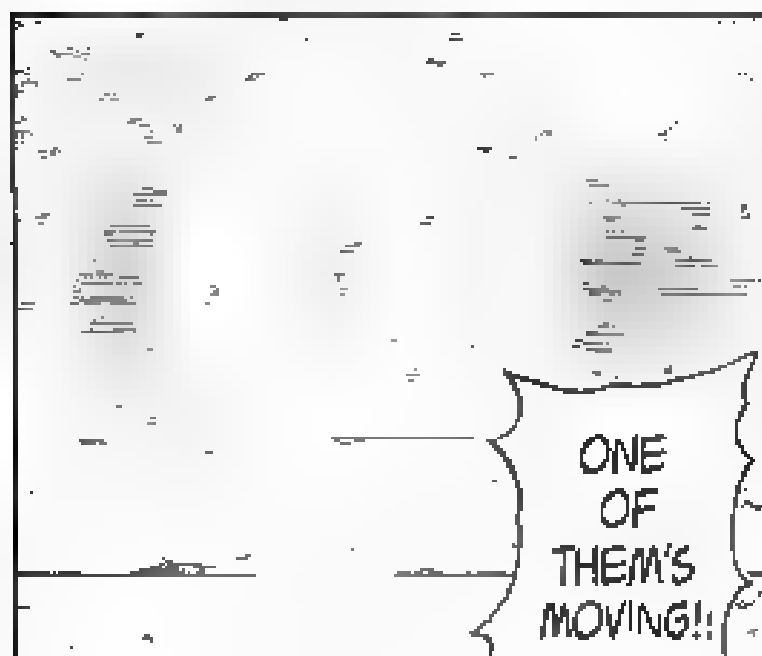
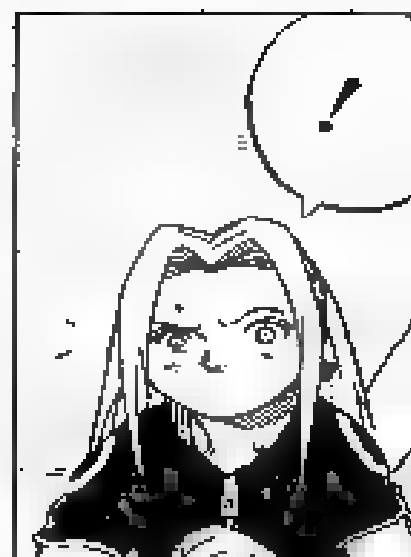
THAT
SUPER-
THICK
MIST
IT'S
STARTING
TO
DISSIPATE..

HJK...



BUT IT
LOOKS LIKE
THEY'RE
JUST
STANDING
THERE,
GLARING AT
EACH
OTHER..

I
SEE
TWO
PEOPLE



ONE
OF
THEM'S
MOVING!!

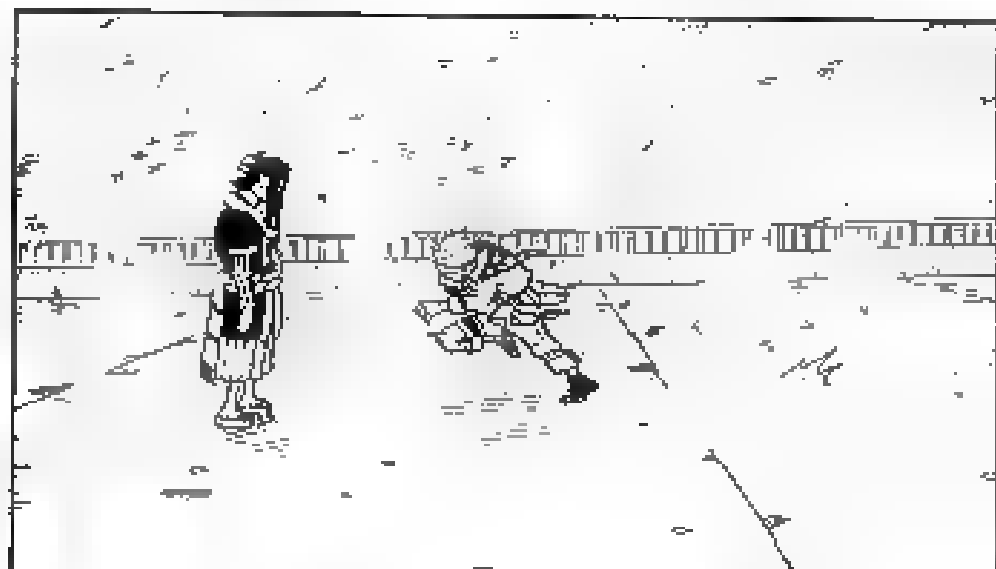
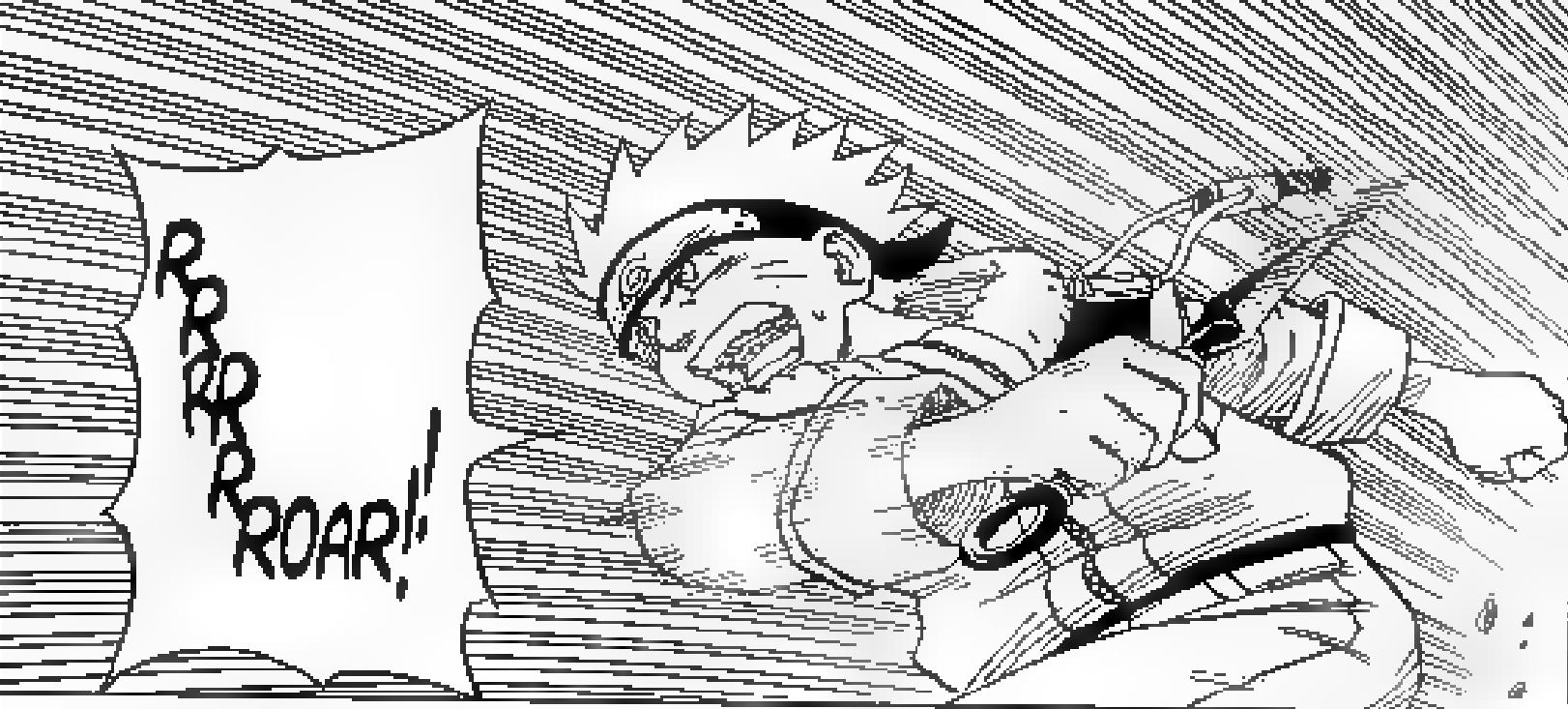


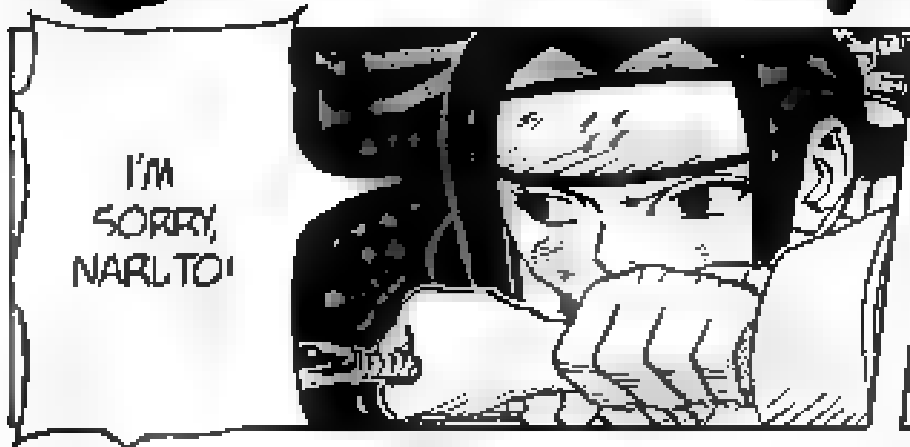
OH!!



IT'S
HARD
TO
MAKE
OUT..

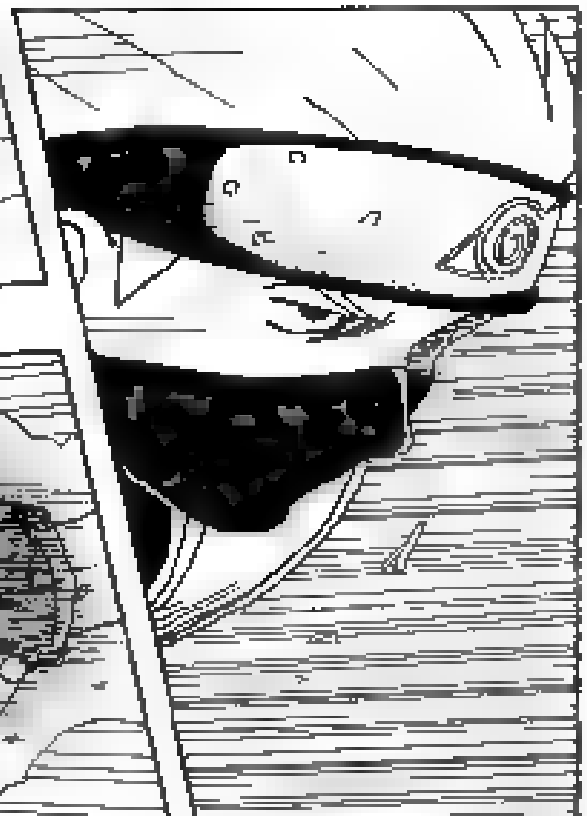
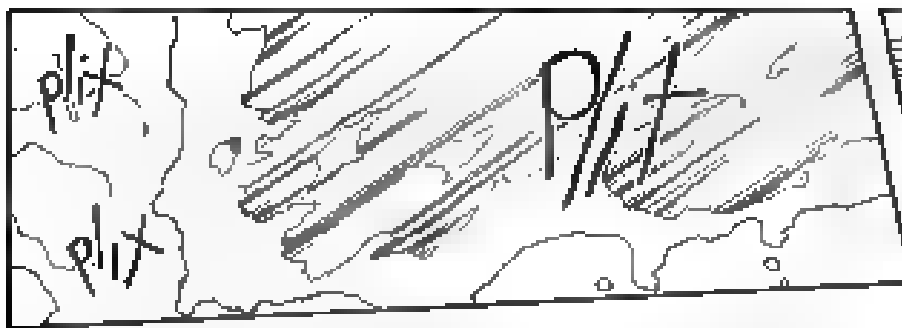
WHICH
ONE IS
YOUR
MASTER
KAKASHI?



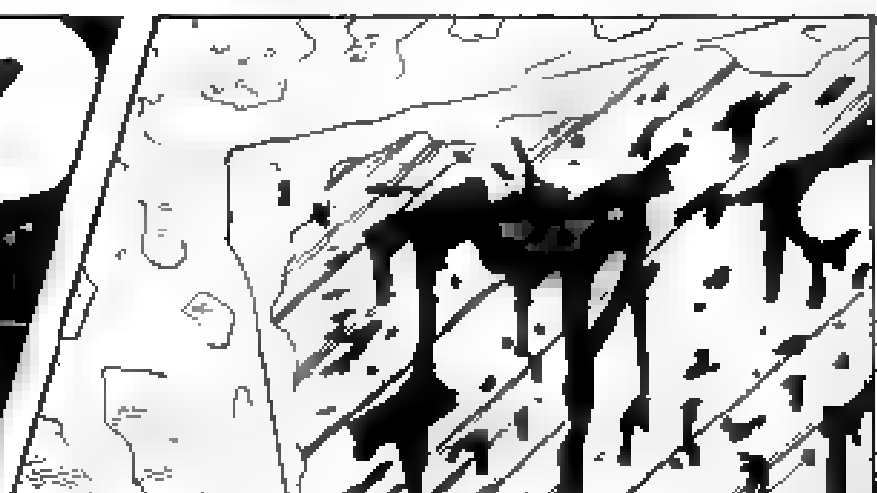
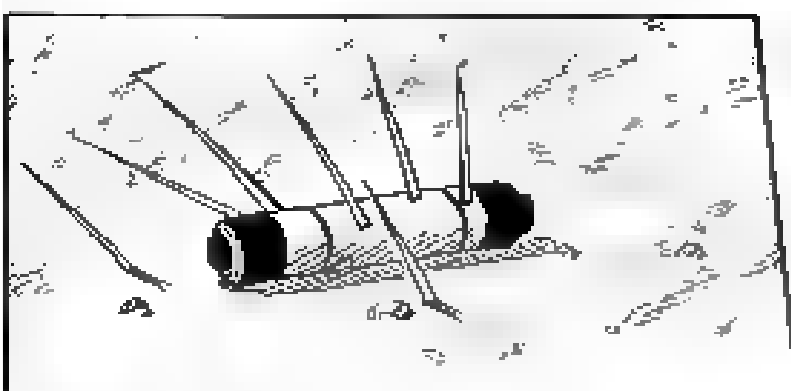




WHAT?

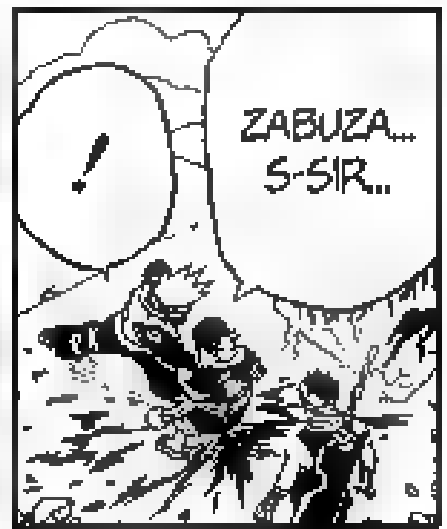
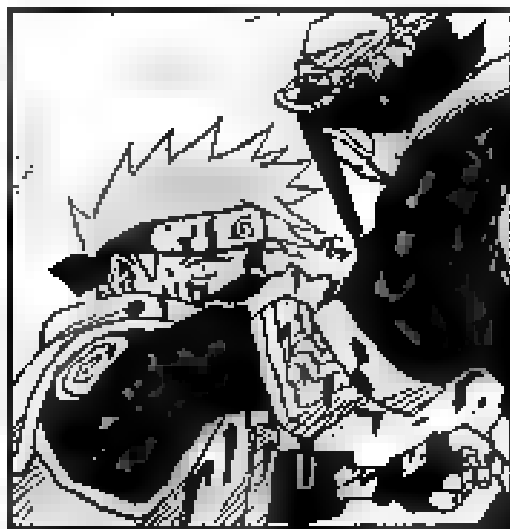












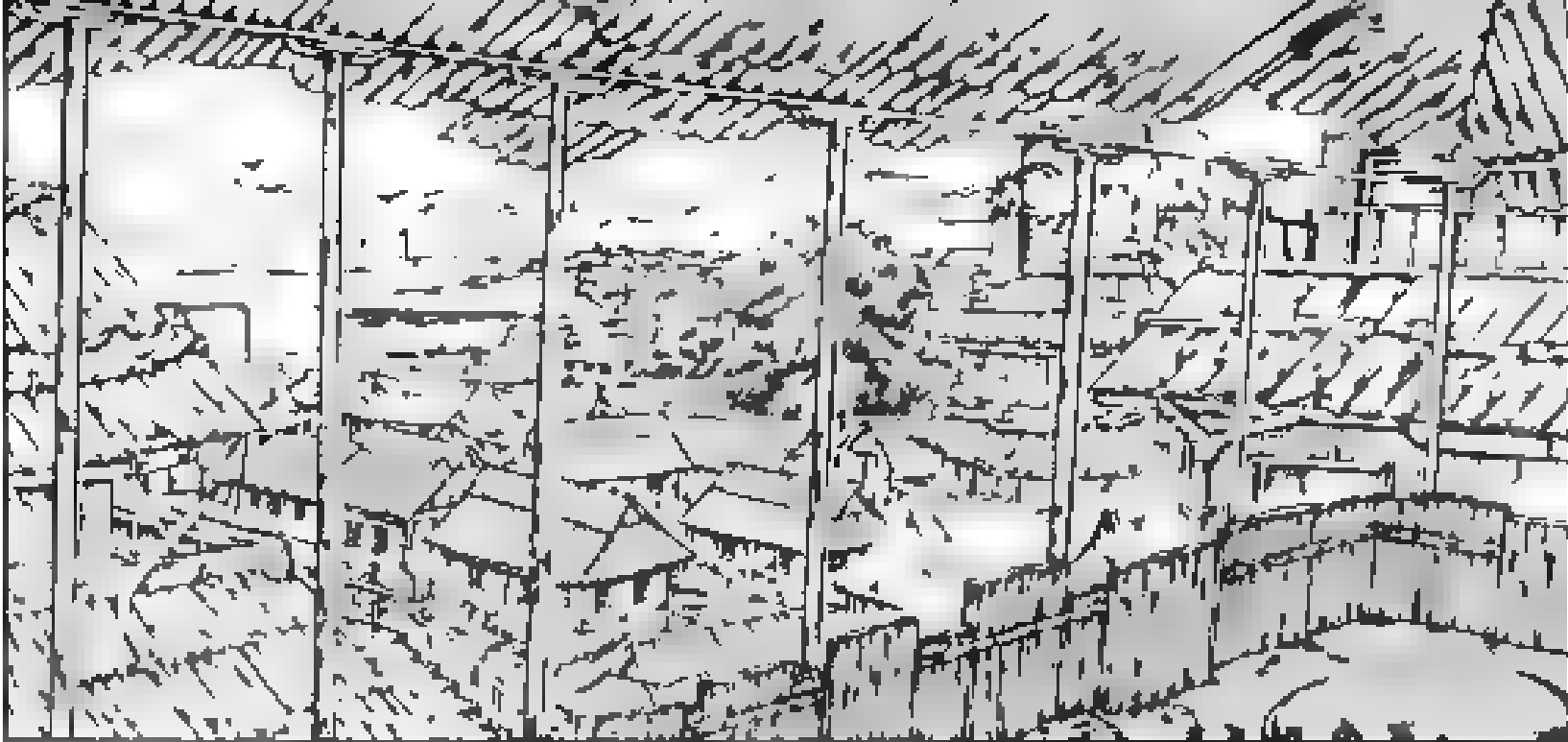


Number 31:

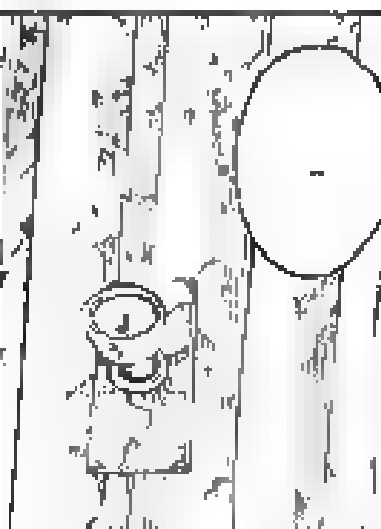
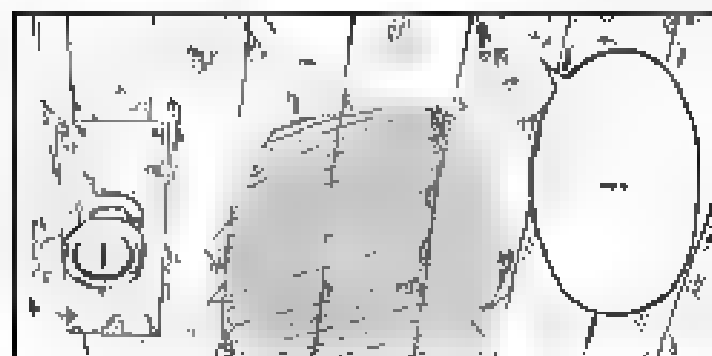
To Face His Own Struggle...

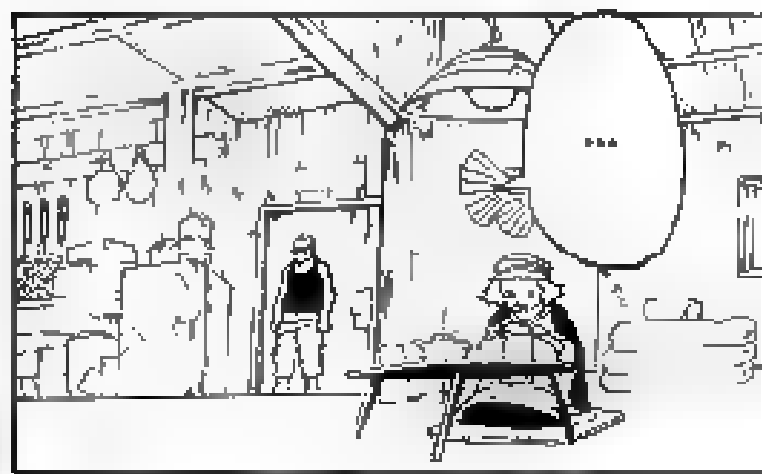
ALICE

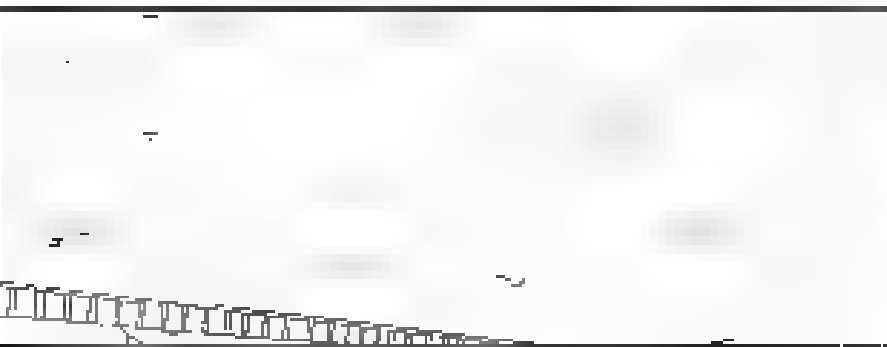
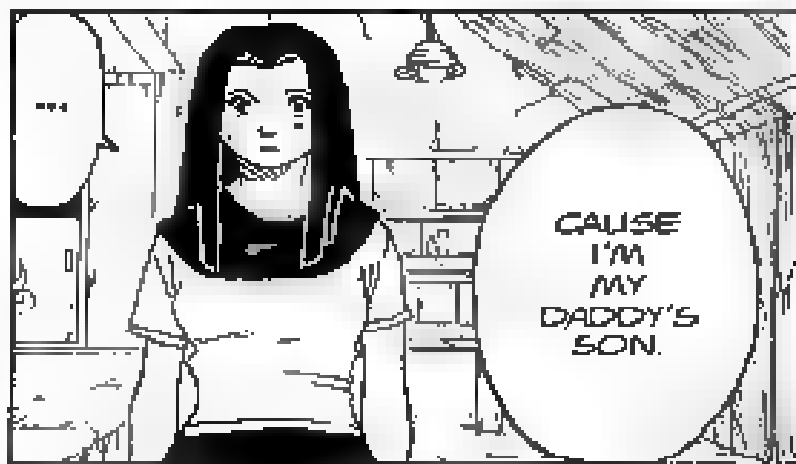
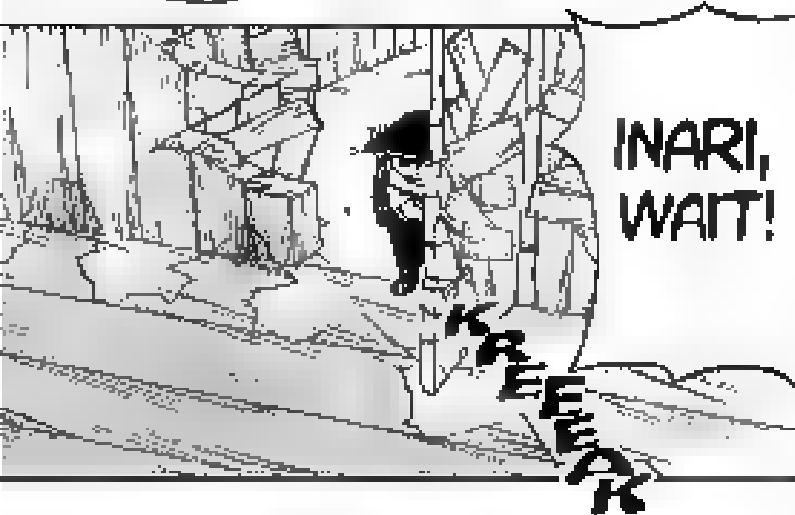


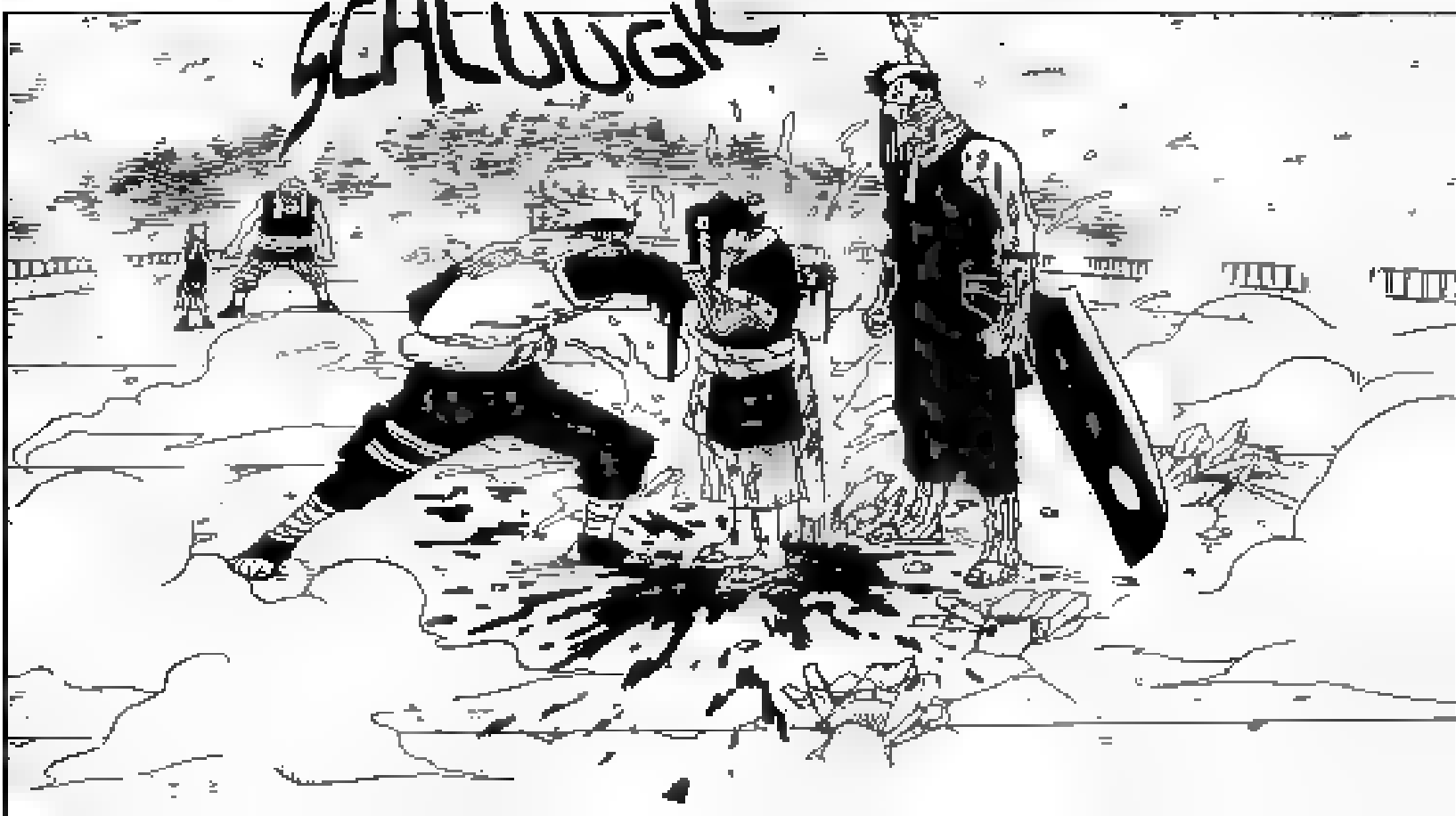
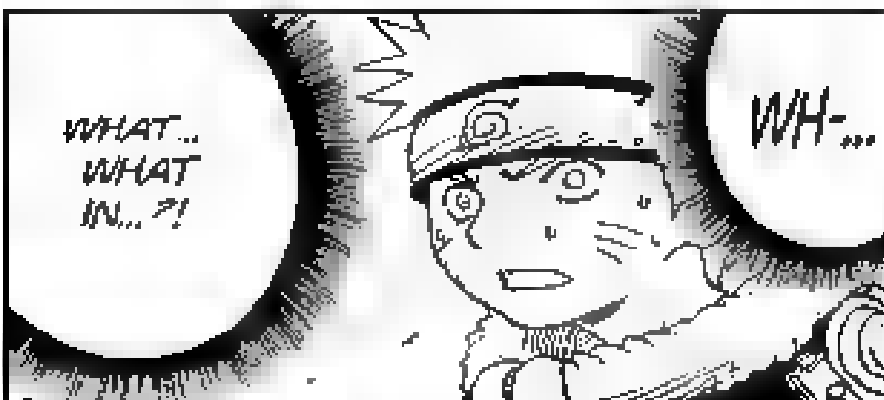


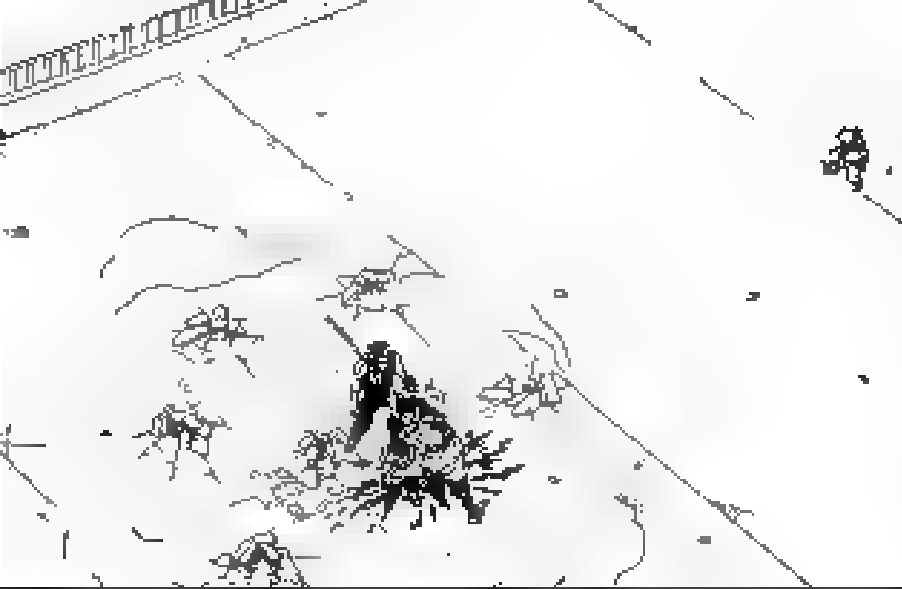
I NEED YOU
TO COME
WITH ME TO
THE BRIDGE !!
IF WE STICK
TOGETHER,
THIS TIME
WE CAN BEAT
GATÔ AND HIS
WHOLE GANG!













...IS
ALREADY...

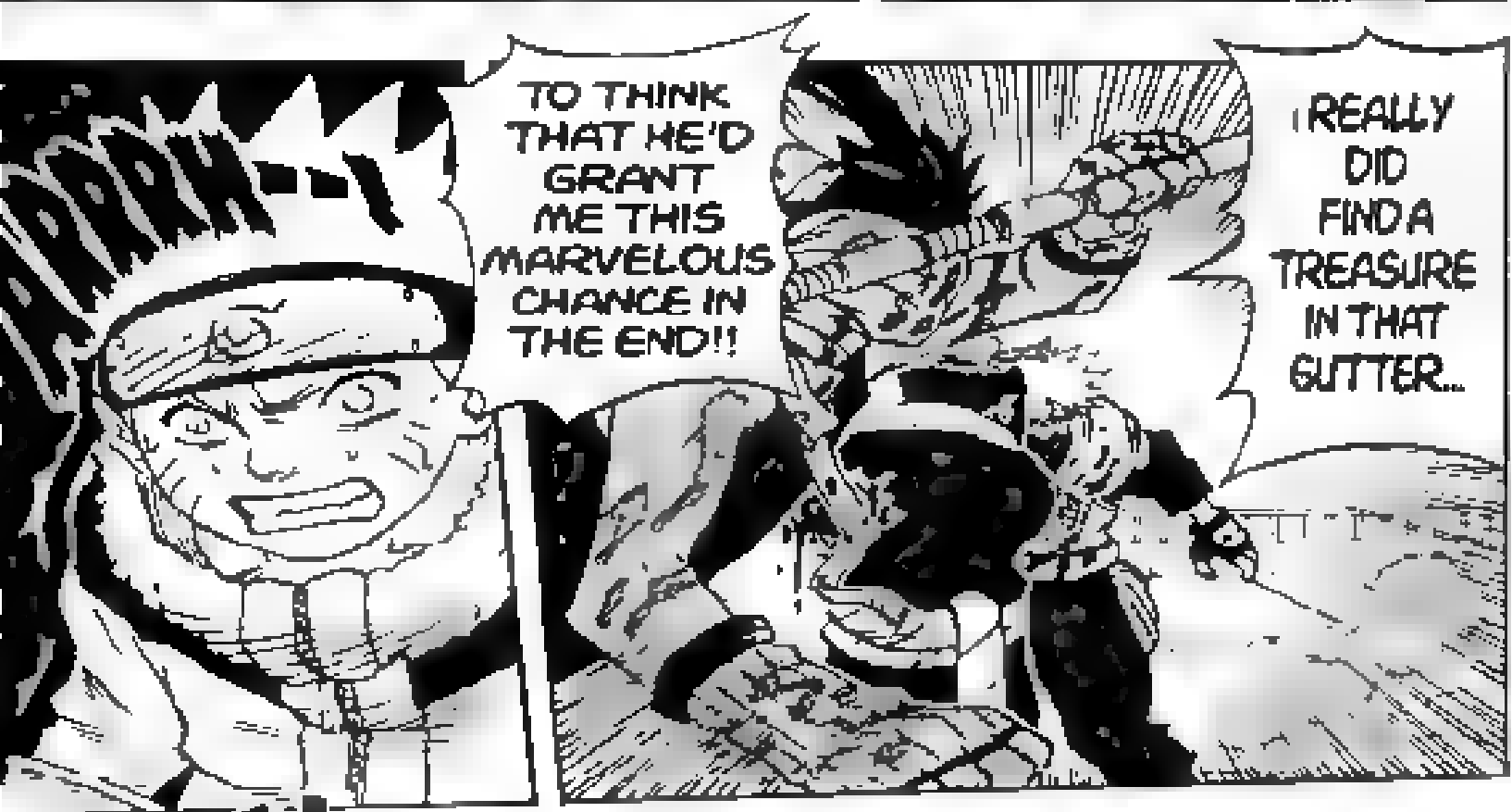
...DEAD...

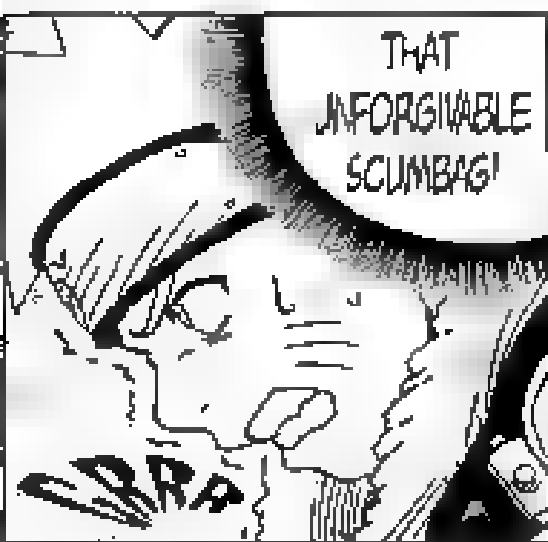
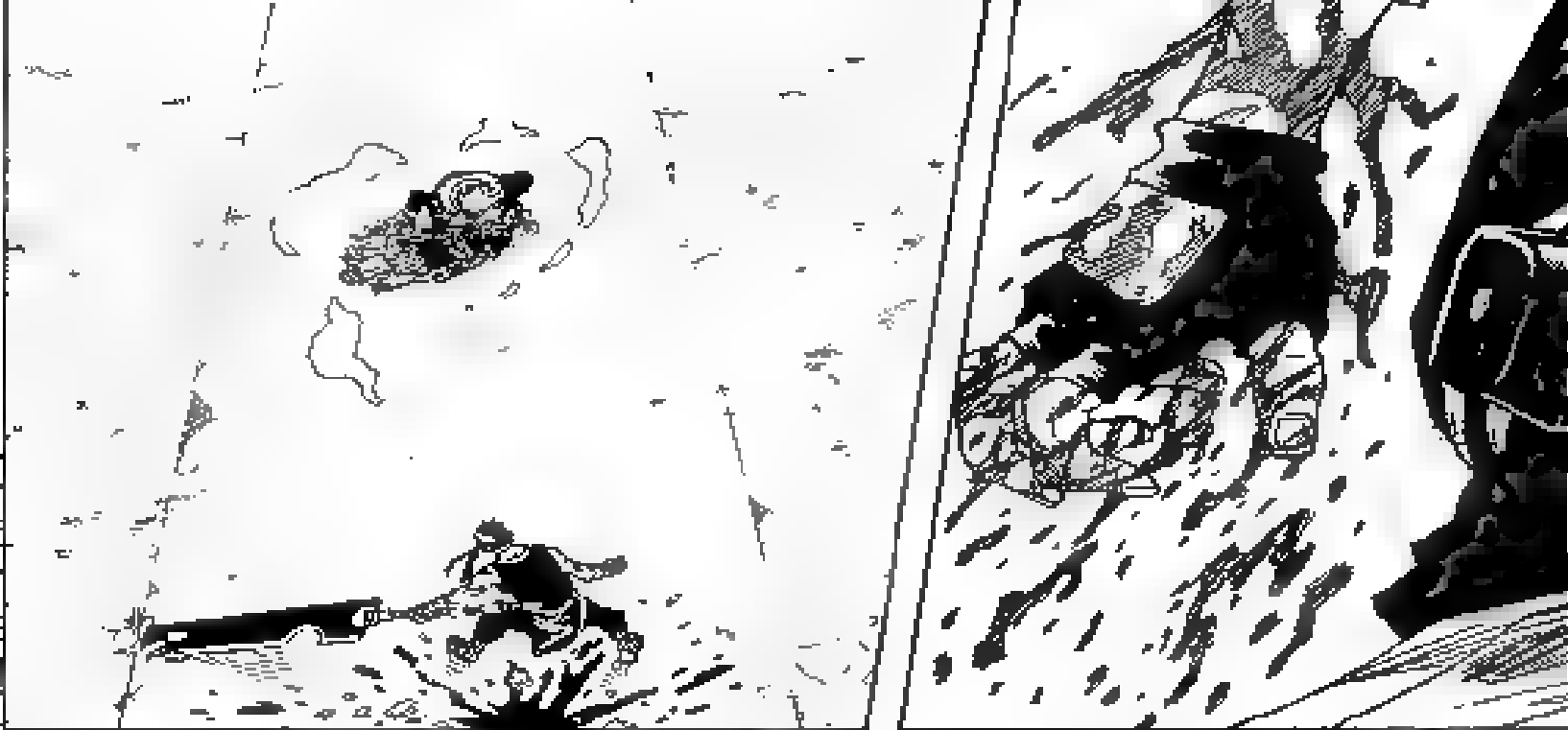


HE'S GOING
TO COME RIGHT
THROUGH THE
KID TO GET
TO ME!

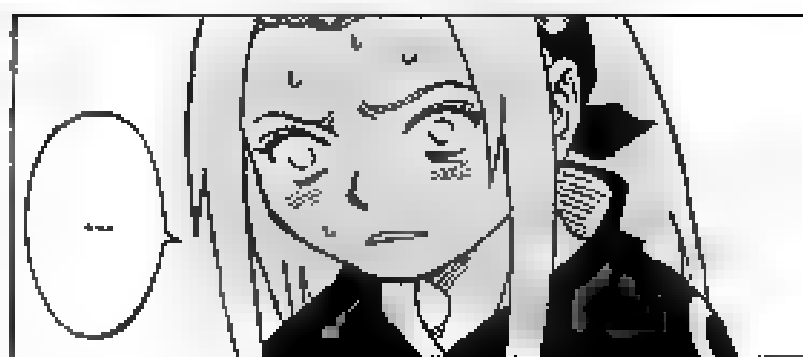
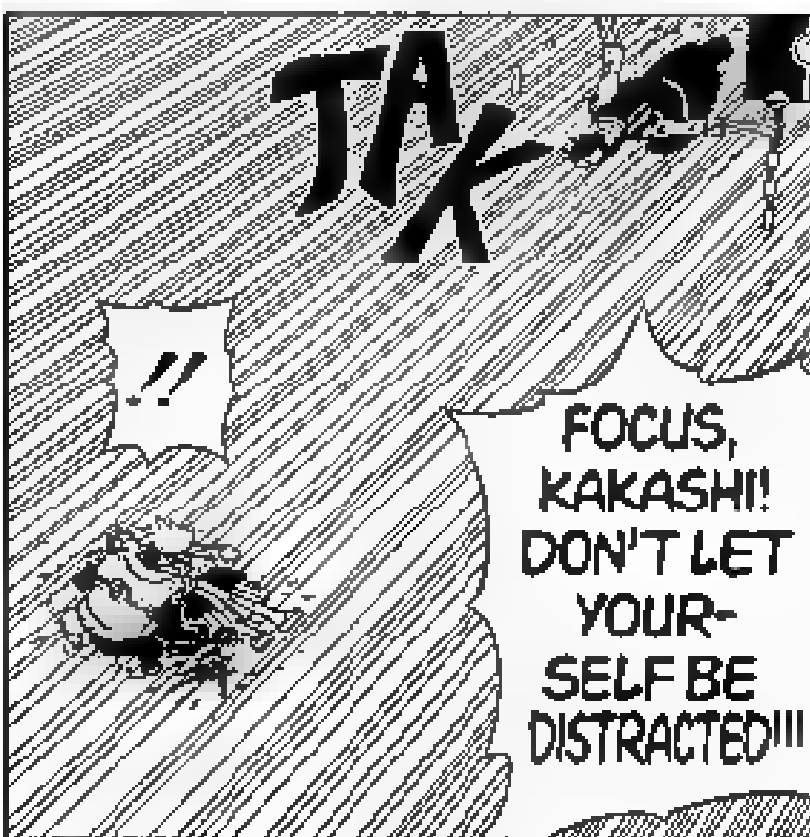
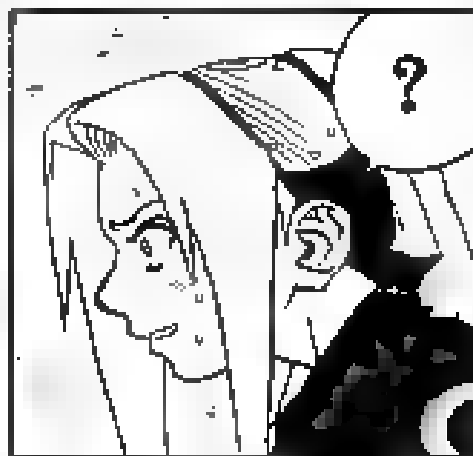
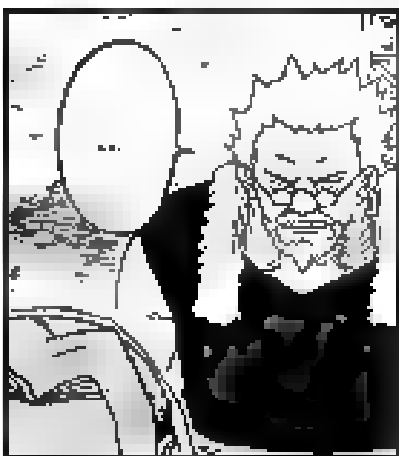
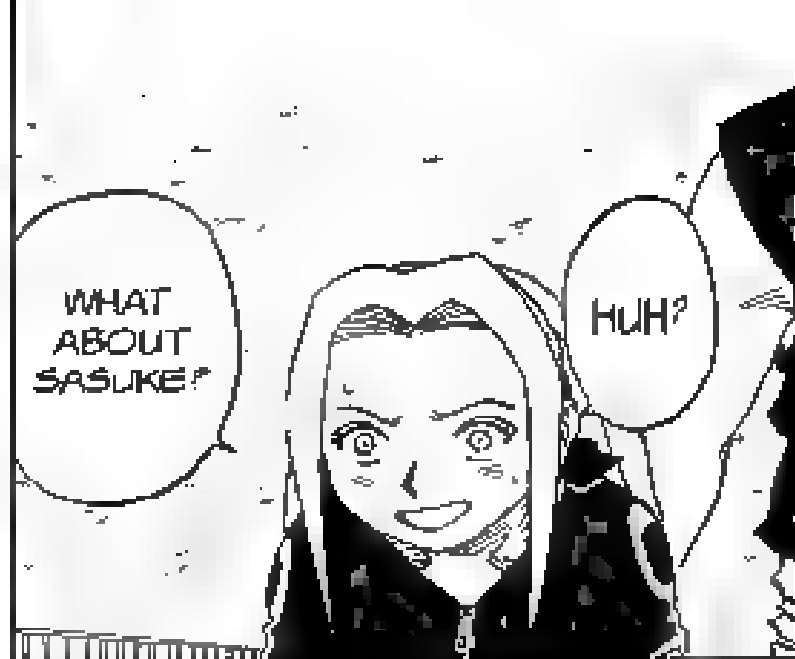


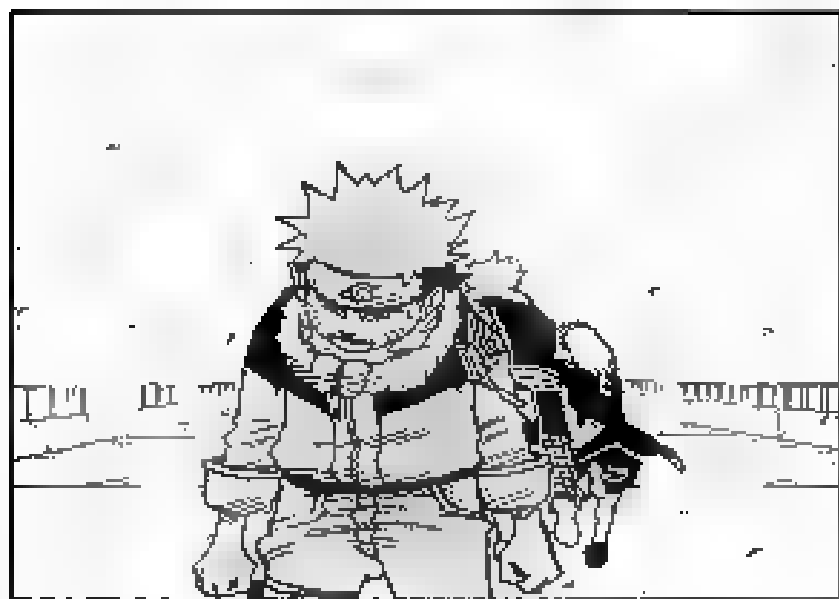
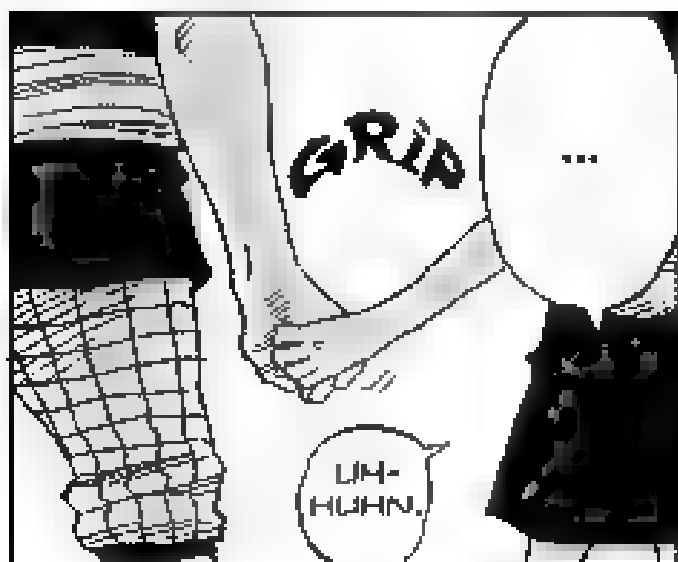
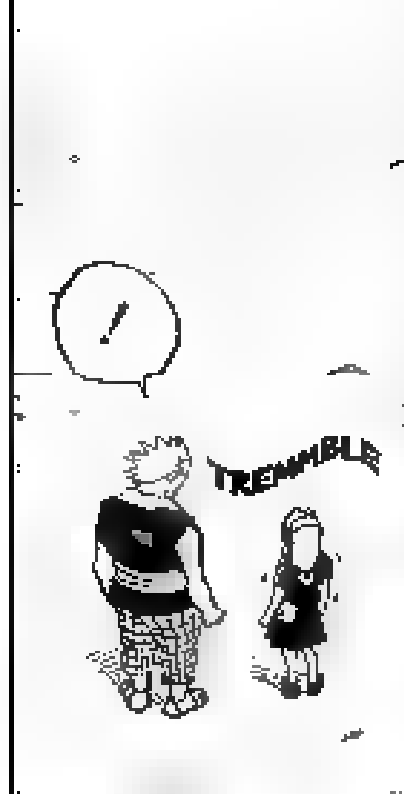
KANG!

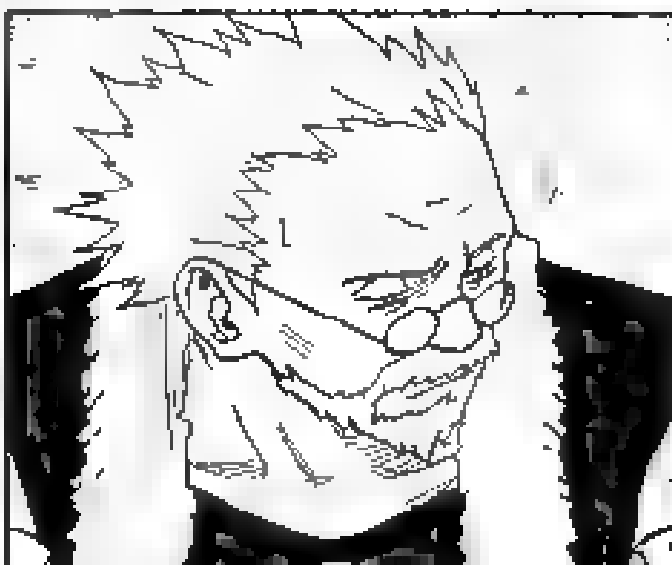
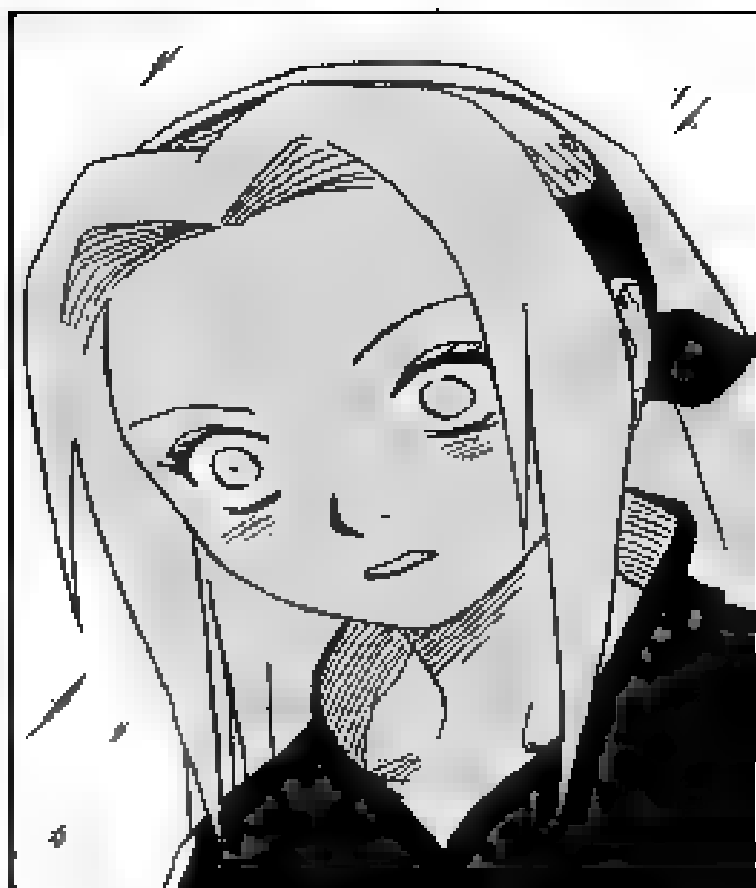


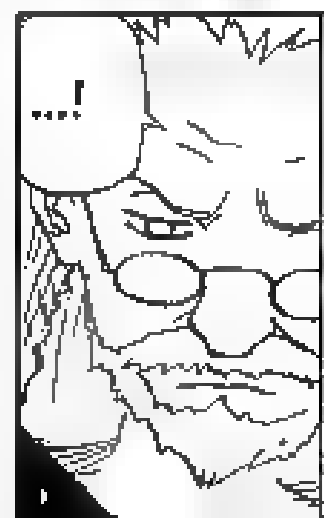
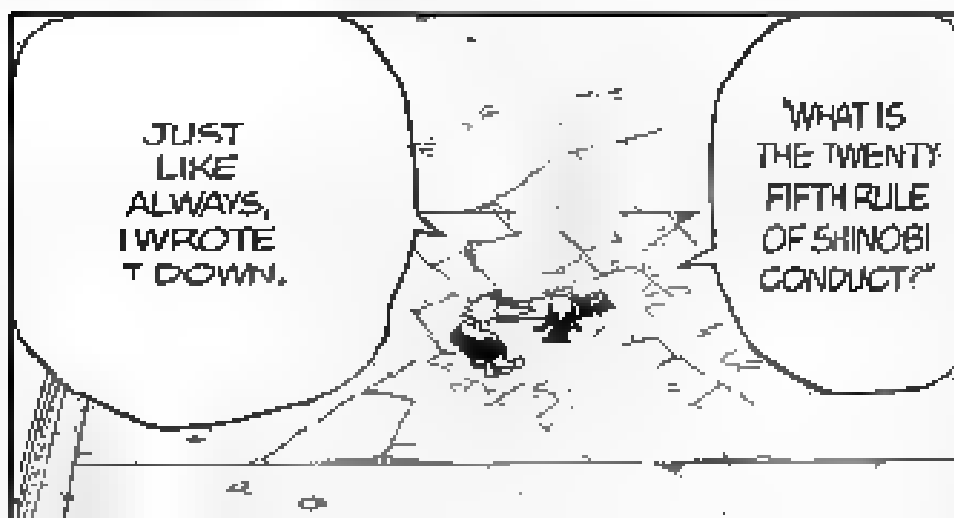
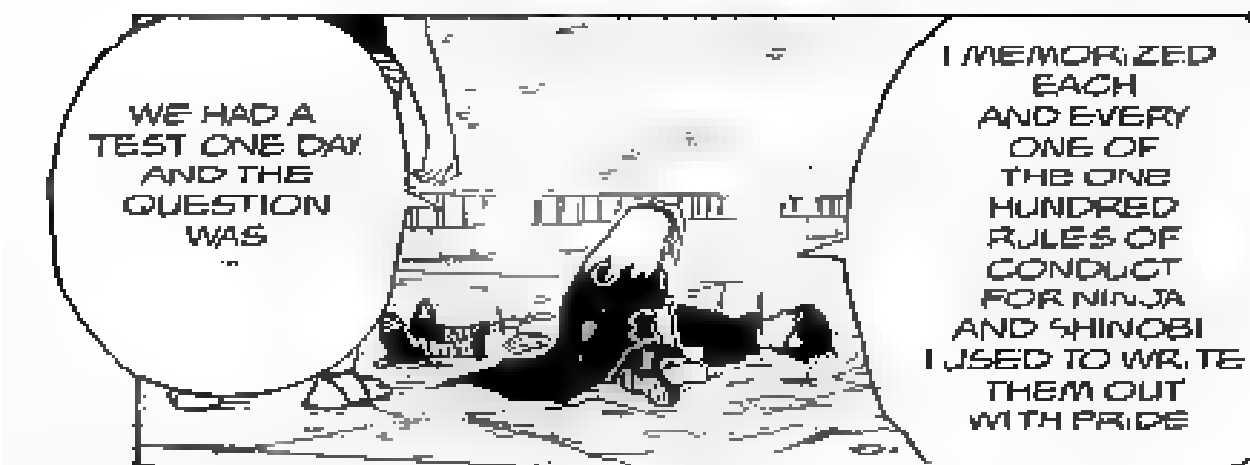
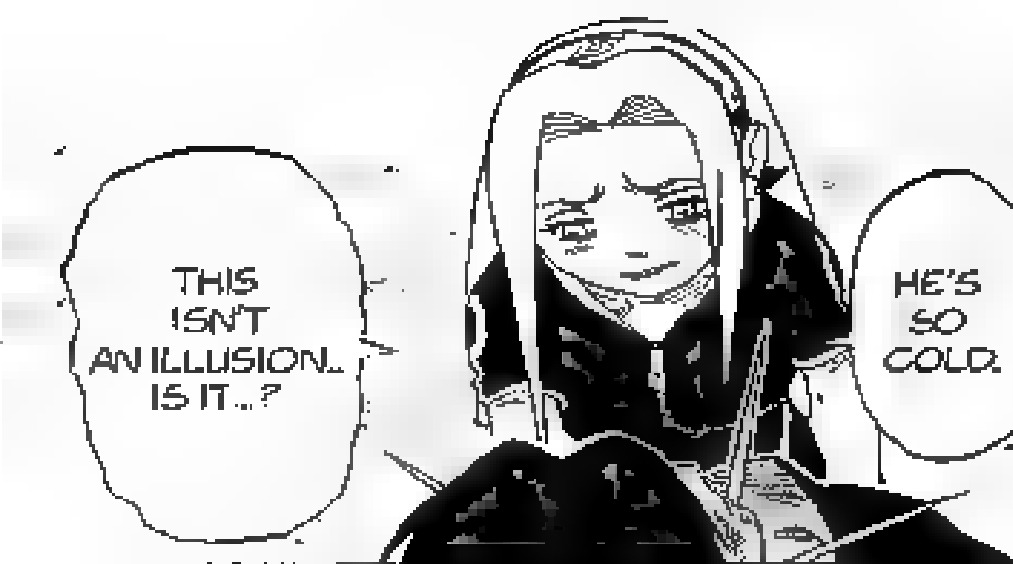


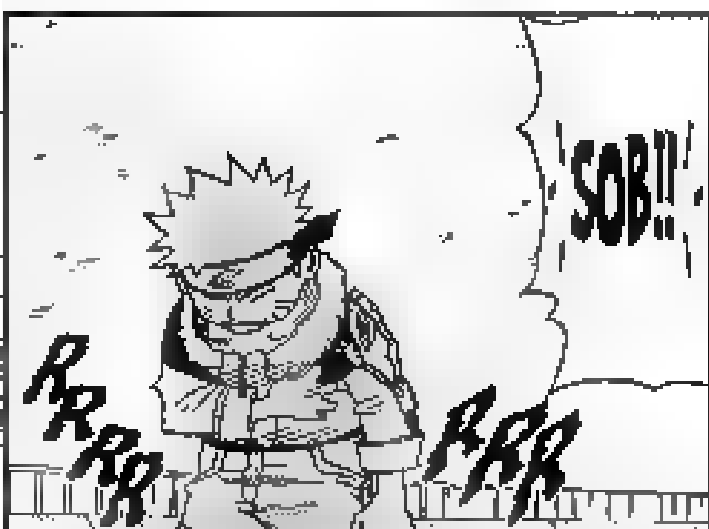
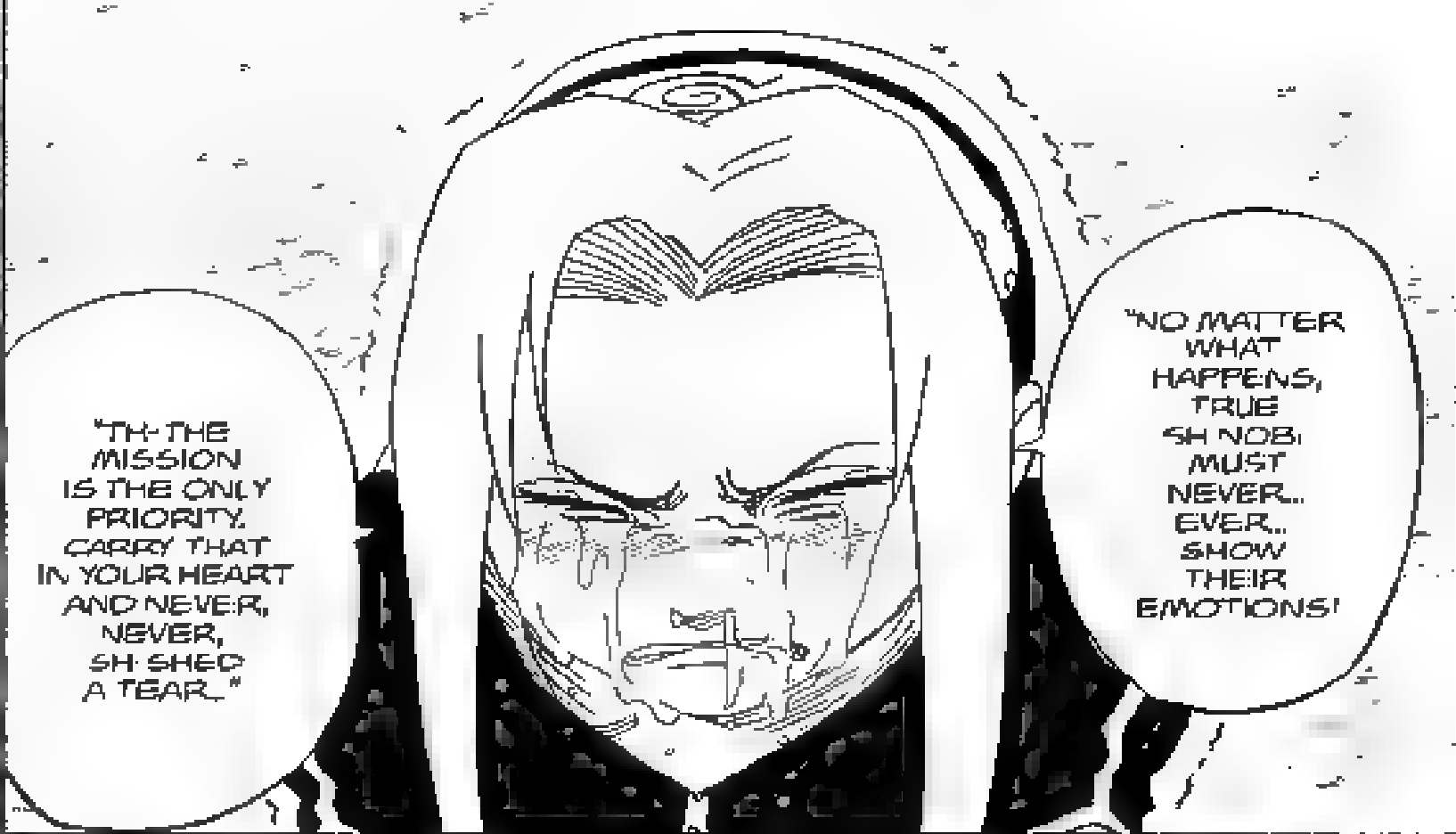


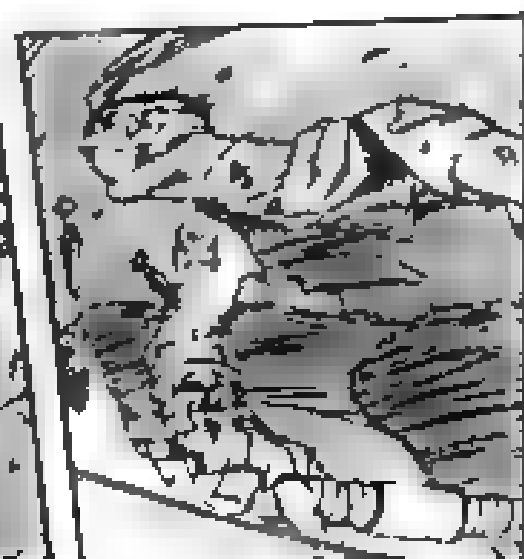
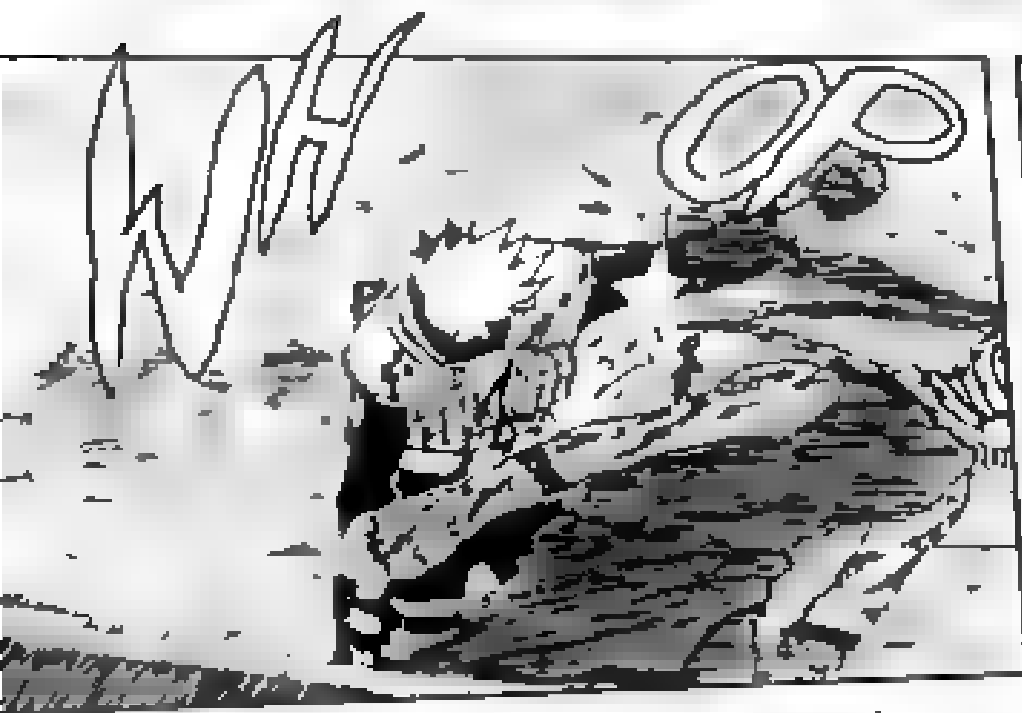
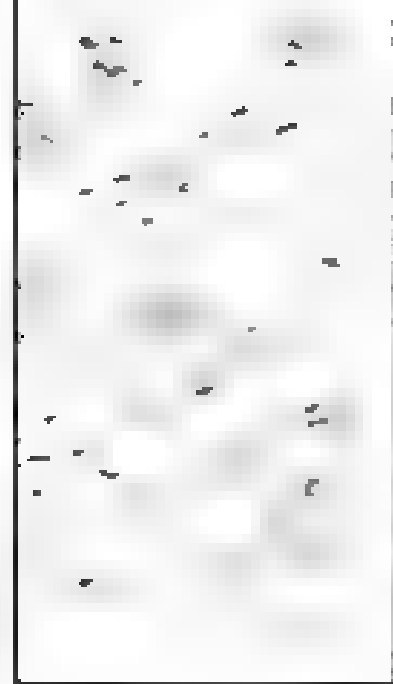


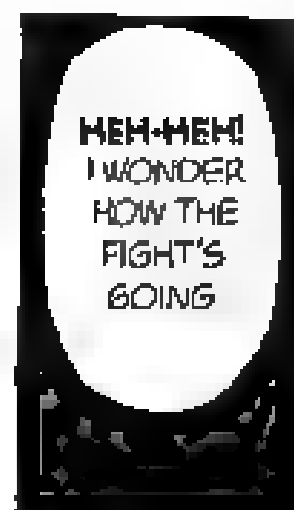
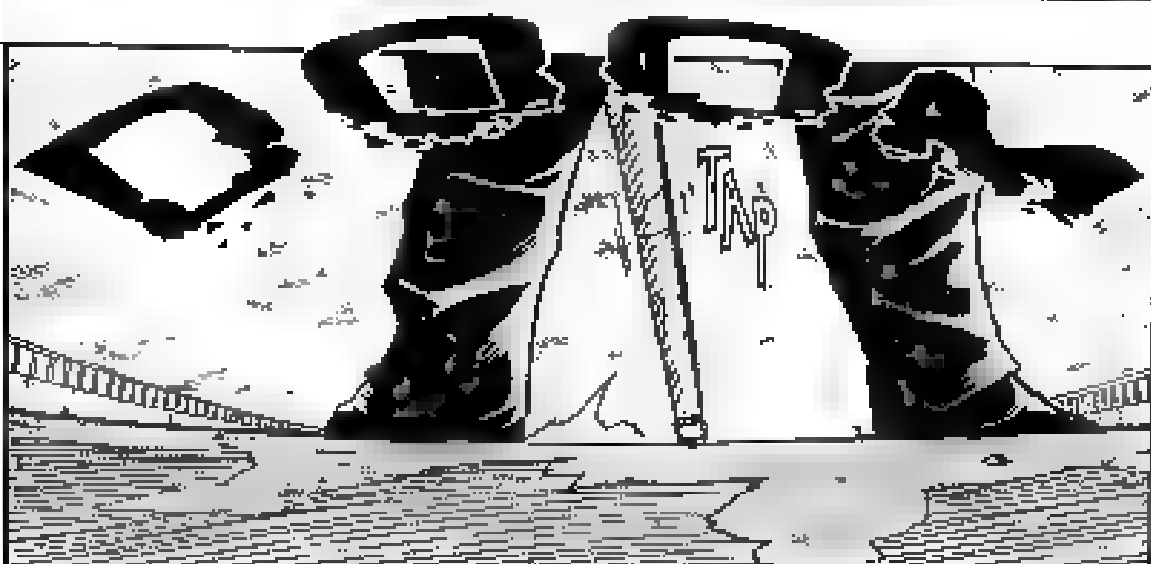


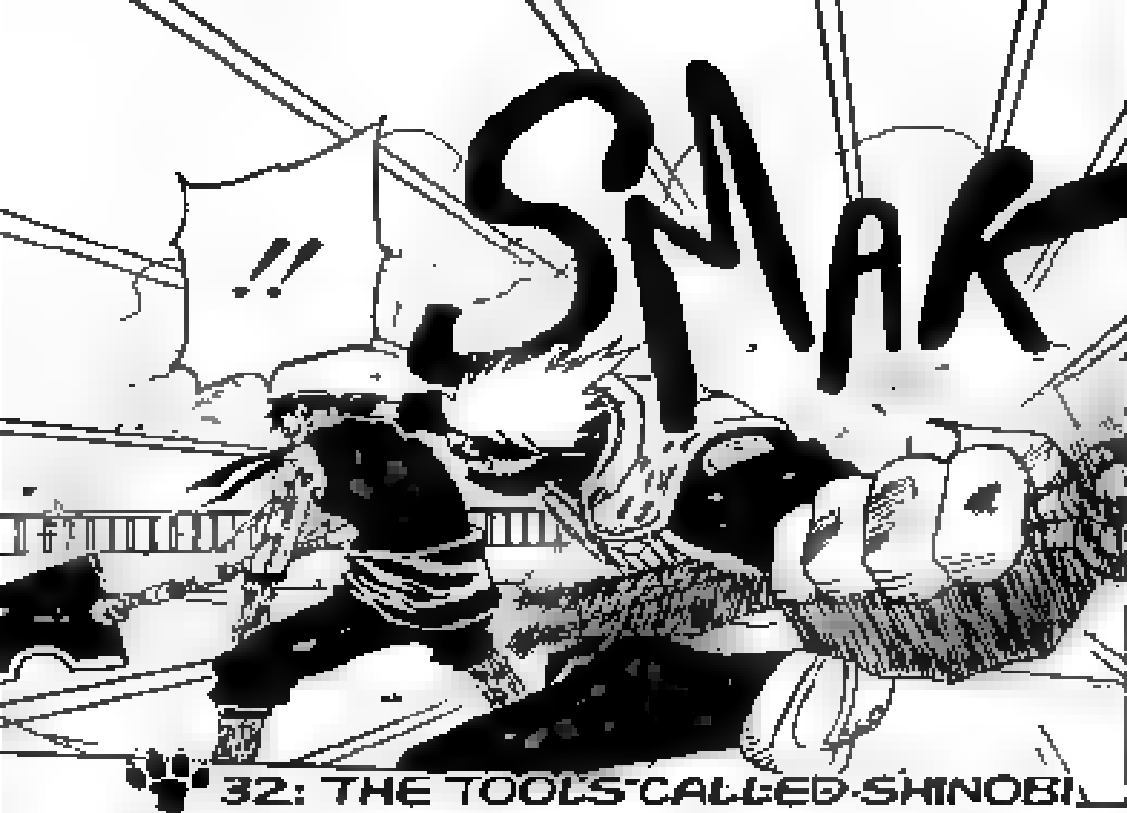




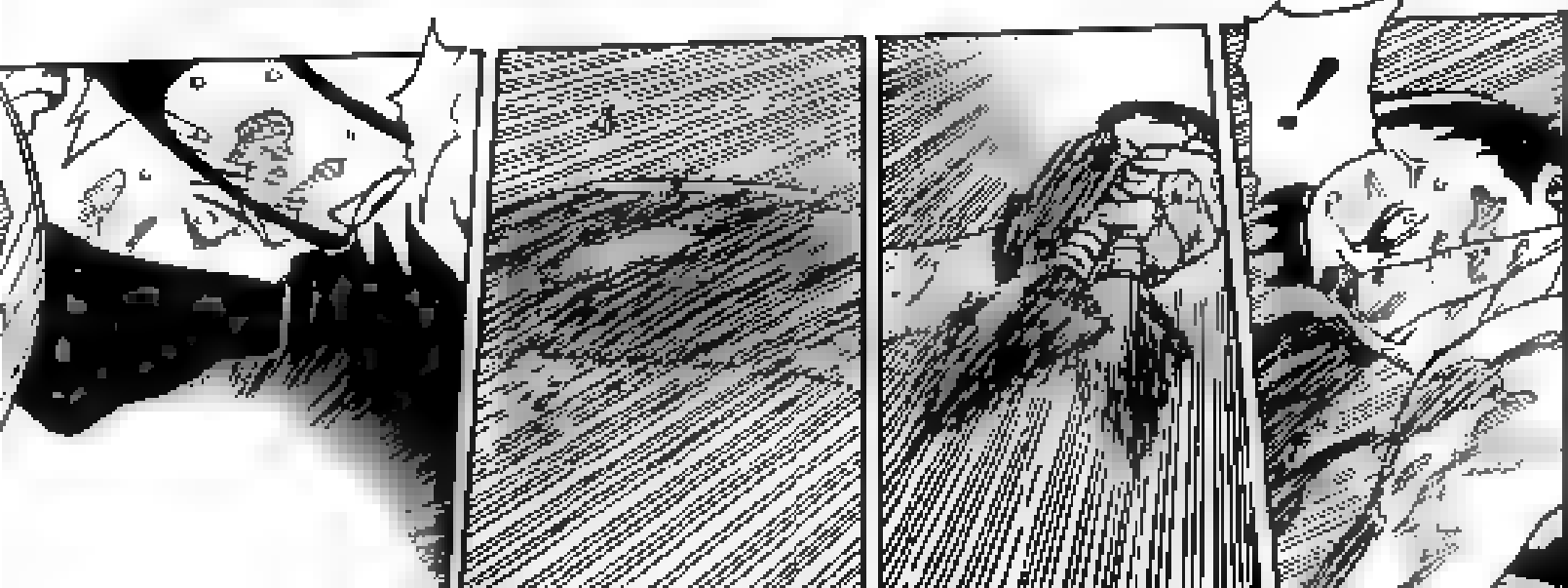
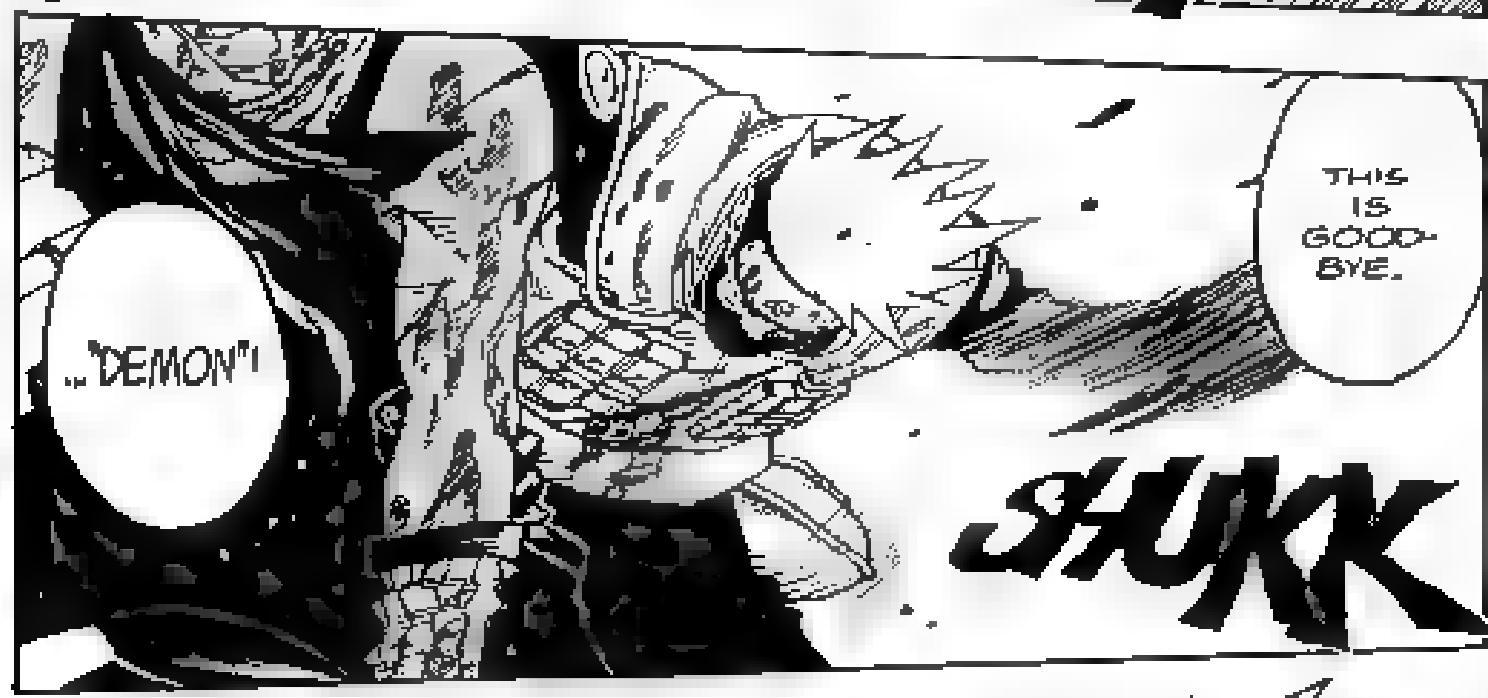
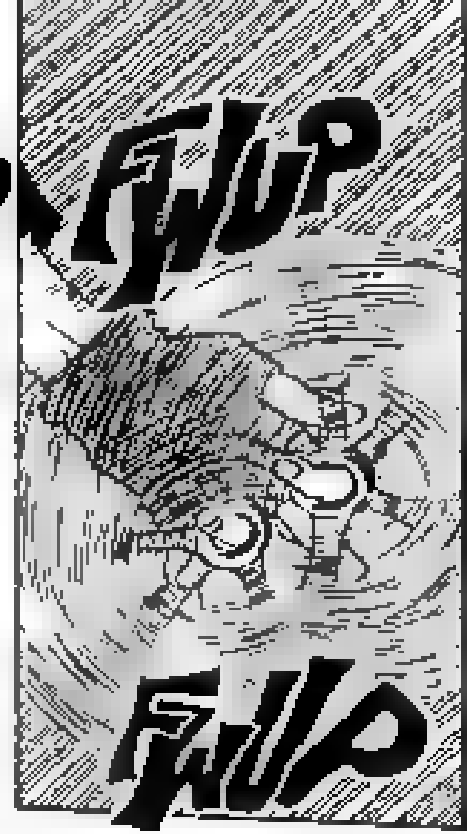








32: THE TOOLS CALLED SHINOBI

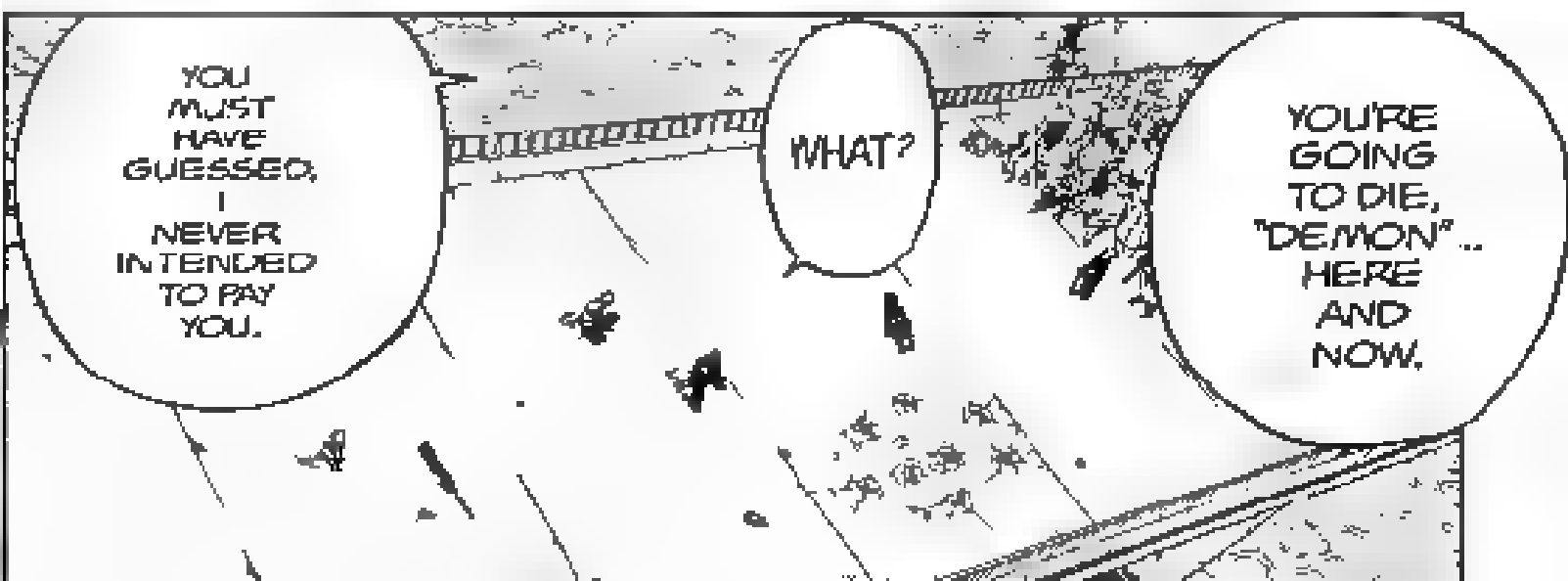
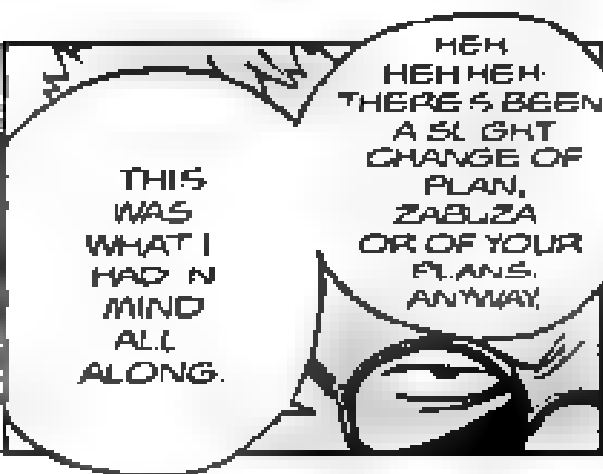




Number 32

The Tools Called Shinobi





ALL OF YOU
NINJA ARE SO
EAGER TO FIGHT
EACH OTHER.
ONCE YOU'VE
WORN EACH
OTHER DOWN,
COMMON THINGS
CAN FINISH
OFF THE REST.

IT'S SO MUCH
SIMPLER TO
HIRE UNFAIR-
RENE GAKK-S-
LINE YOURSELF.
NO ONE CARES
WHAT YOU DO TO
YOUR KIND ONCE
THE JOB IS DONE.

IT'S SUCH A BOTHER
HIRING A SKILLED SHINOBI
AFFILIATED WITH ONE
OF THE TOP VILLAGES.
IT'S EXPENSIVE... AND
THEY TEND TO HAVE
FRIENDS WHO OBJECT
WHEN I BETRAY AND
KILL THEM.

IT'S A
GREAT
BUSINESS
PLAN.
EFFICIENT
AND
INEXPENSIVE.

HEH
HEH
YOU'RE
NO
DEMON.

MORE
LIKE A
BABY
DEMON,
IF THAT.

CALLING
YOURSELF
THE DEMON
OF KIRIGAKURE
IS JUST PLAIN
FALSE
ADVERTISING!

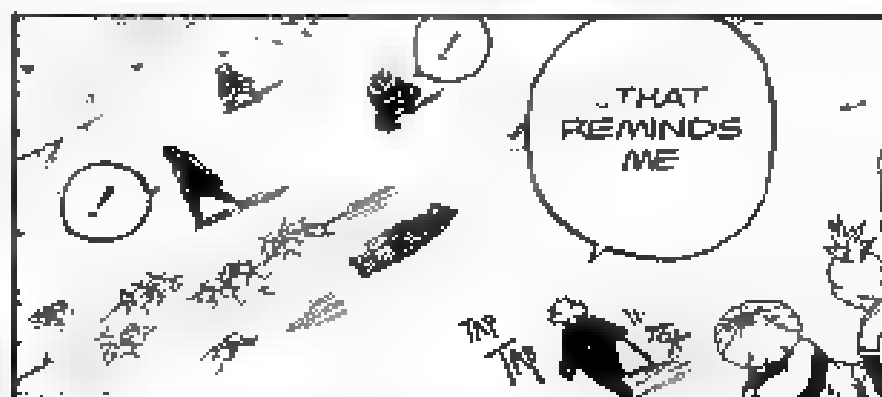
MY ONLY
MISTAKE
WAS HIRING
YOU IN THE
FIRST
PLACE.

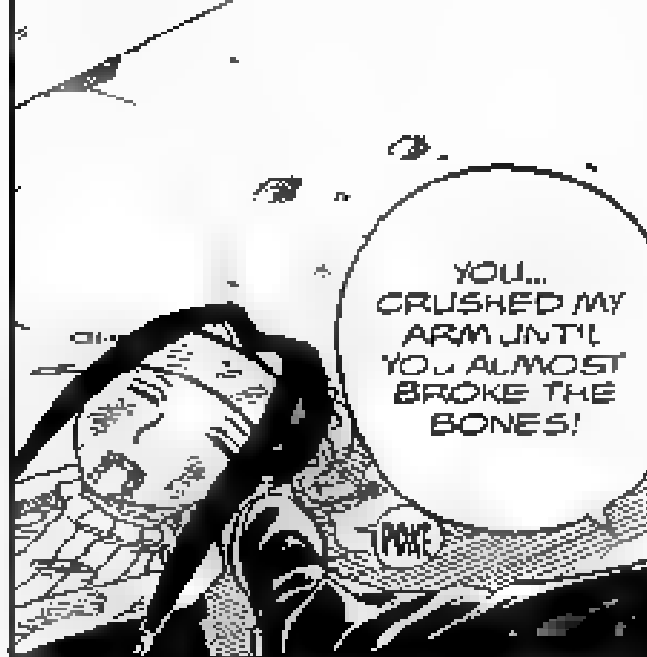
THAT'S
SOME
CROWD!

WHO
THE
HELL
ARE
THEY?

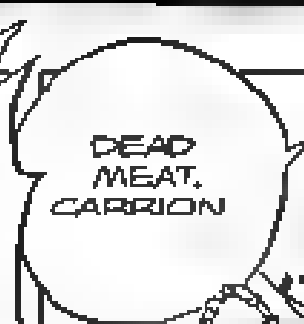
GAHAHAHAHA!


THE SHADE
YOU'RE IN,
WE'LL TAKE
YOU DOWN
WITHOUT
EVEN
BREAKING
A SWEAT!





WHAT
THE
HECK
ARE
YOU
DOING,
YOU
CREEP?!





HE WAS YOUR
COMRADE...
YOUR PARTNER...
HE WORKED
FOR YOU
FOR YEARS!!!

BUT YOU
SHOULD CARE!
THAT FAT
SCUMBAG IS
DESECRATING
HIM!!!




!!

HAKU
IS DEAD.

LIKE
WHAT?

BUT...




I DIDN'T
VALUE HAKU
FOR HIMSELF
BUT FOR
THE TAIN
HIS BLOOD
CARRIED
AND FOR WHAT
HIS TALENTS
COULD DO
FOR ME.

I
APOLOGIZE
FOR
NOTHING.

...GATO'S
BEEN
USING
ME...
AND I
USED HAKU.

WEREN'T
YOU
LISTENING?
IT'S A
SHINOBI'S
LOT.
ALL OF US
ARE EITHER
USERS,
OR TOOLS...
OR BOTH.

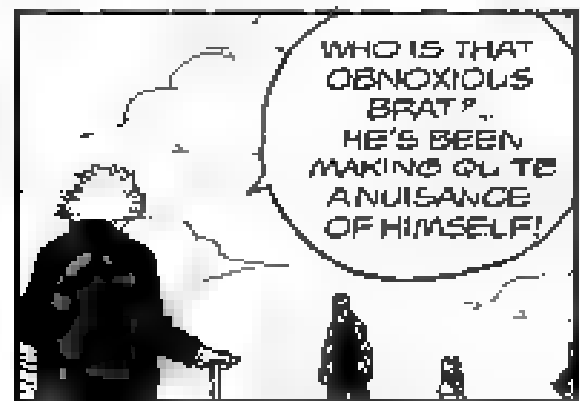


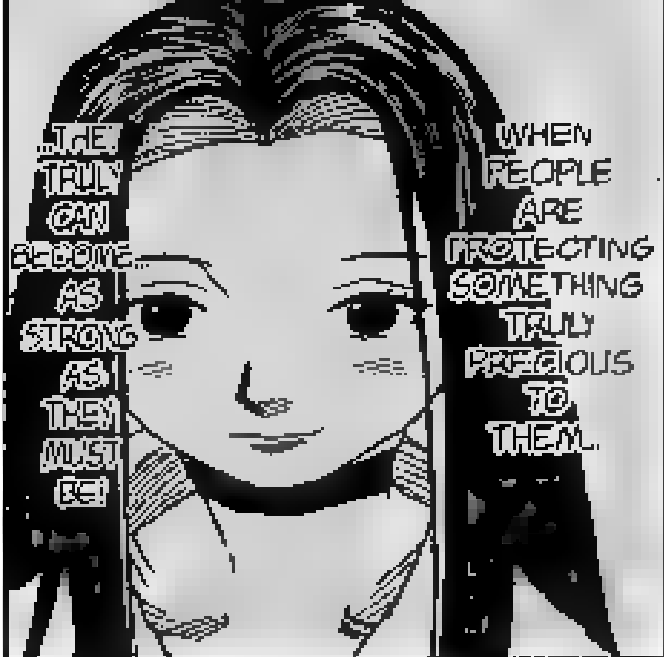
STOP IT,
NARUTO!
LEAVE
HIM ALONE
OUR
QUARREL
S OVER.

BESIDES
WHICH...

YOU

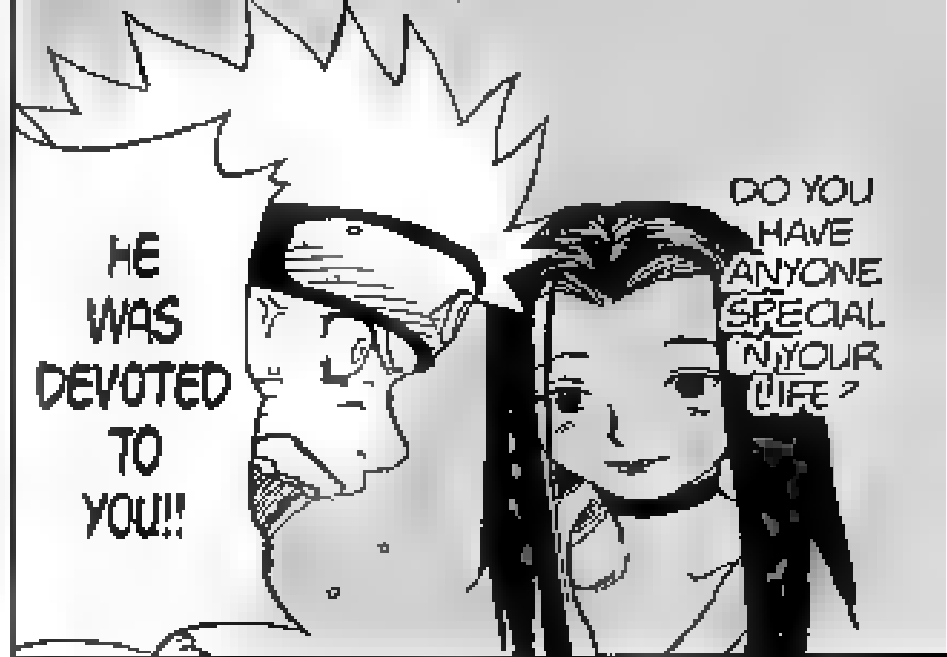
DO
YOU
REALLY
MEAN
THAT?





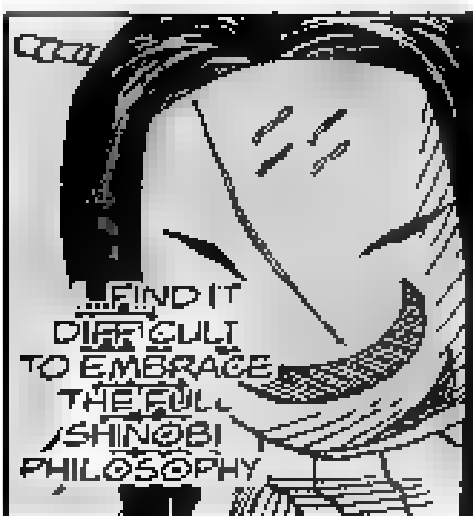
...THE
TRULY
CAN
BECOME
AS
STRONG
AS
THEY
MUST
BE!

WHEN
PEOPLE
ARE
PROTECTING
SOMETHING
TRULY
PRECIOUS
TO
THEM...

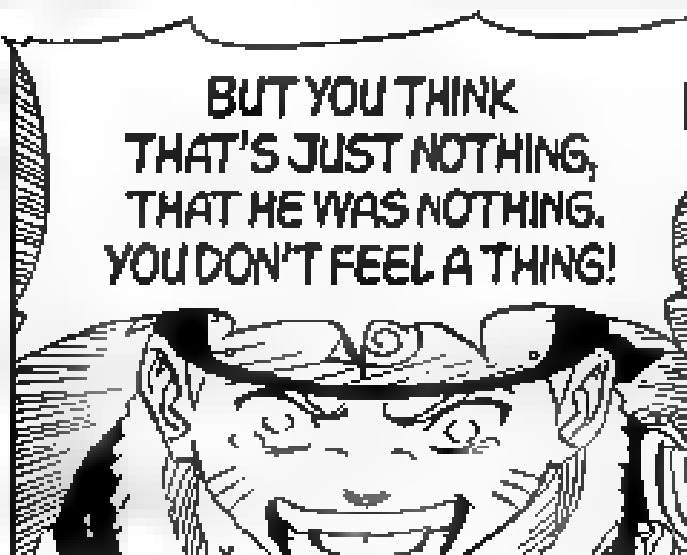


HE
WAS
DEVOTED
TO
YOU!!

DO YOU
HAVE
ANYONE
SPECIAL
IN YOUR
LIFE?



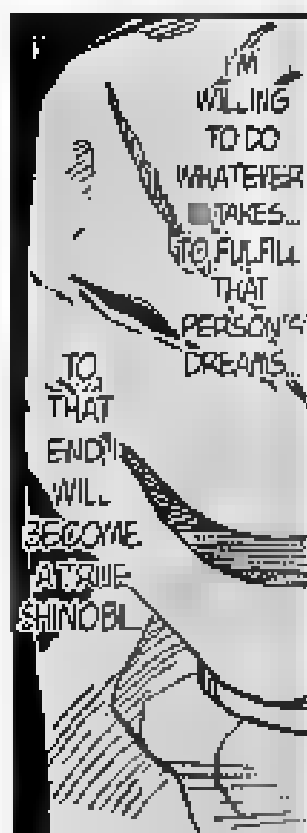
...FIND IT
DIFFICULT
TO EMBRACE
THE FULL
SHINOBI
PHILOSOPHY



BUT YOU THINK
THAT'S JUST NOTHING,
THAT HE WAS NOTHING.
YOU DON'T FEEL A THING!



IS THAT
HOW YOU GET...
WHEN YOUR
POWERS
ARE AS STRONG
AS YOURS ARE?



I'M
WILLING
TO DO
WHATEVER
IT TAKES...
TO FULFILL
THAT
PERSON'S
DREAMS...
TO
THAT
END I
WILL
BECOME
A TRUE
SHINOBI



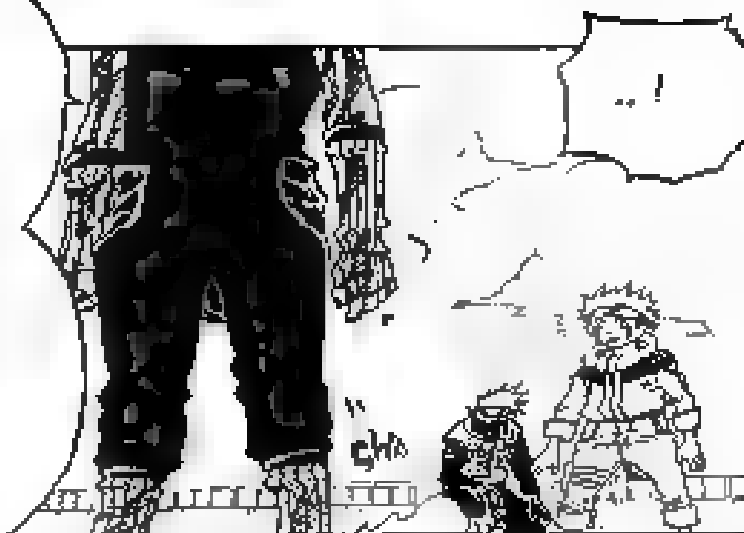
ARE
YOU
REALLY
THAT
HEARTLESS?





WHAT
HAKL DID..
WAS NOT
JUST FOR
ME,

WHILE WE
FOUGHT,
HE BROKE
HIS HEART..
OVER YOU..
AND YOUR
FRIENDS.
THAT'S
THE TRUTH.



KID..



YOU'RE
RIGHT,
YOU
KNOW.

... I'M GLAD
MY LAST
BATTLE..
WAS
AGAINST
YOU BOY.

?!
..HUH?



HE
WAS
TOO
KIND..
TOO
GENTLE

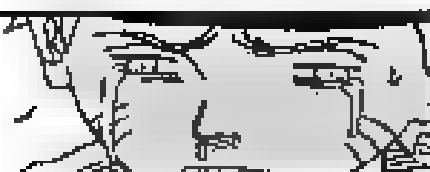


WOULD
YOU
LEND
ME
YOUR
KUNAI
KNIFE?

FUTTER



HUNK?
UHL..



SURE.

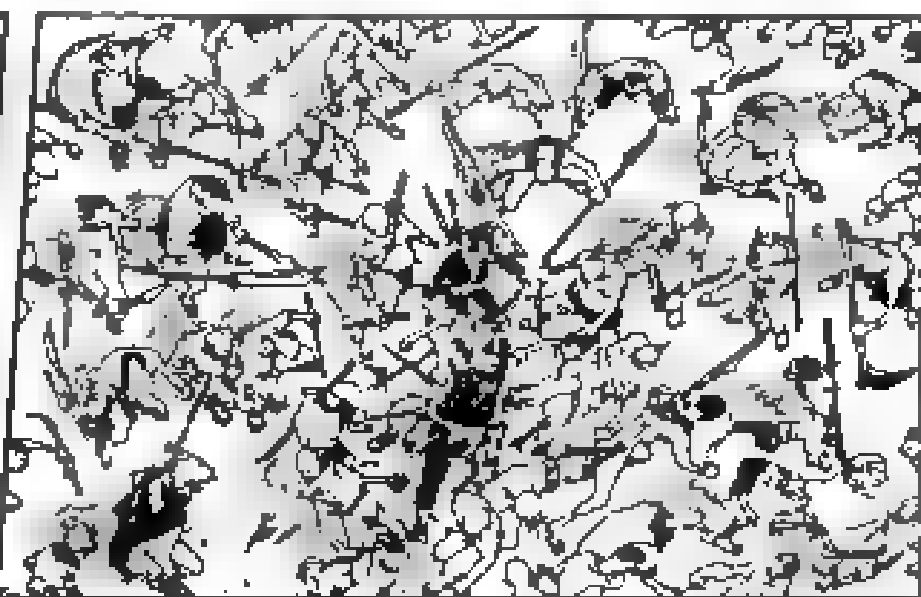
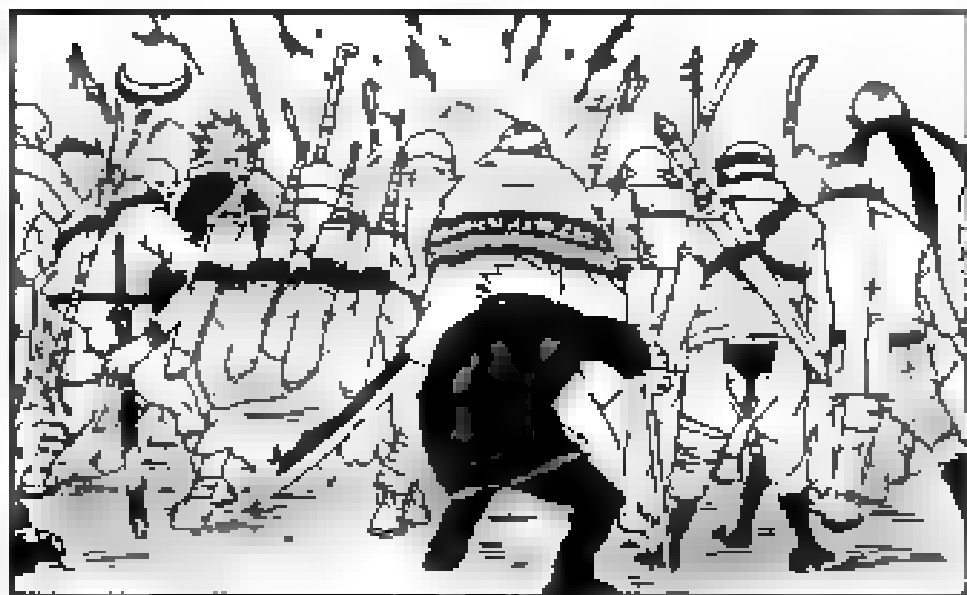
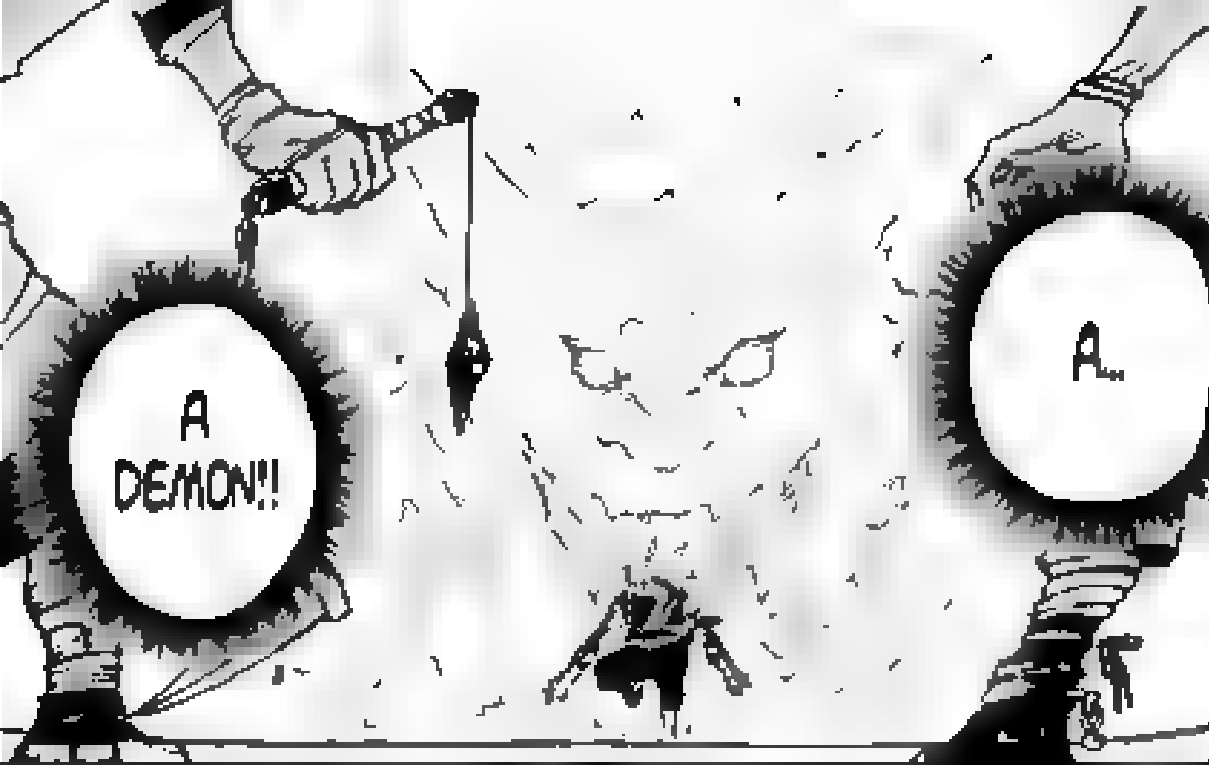


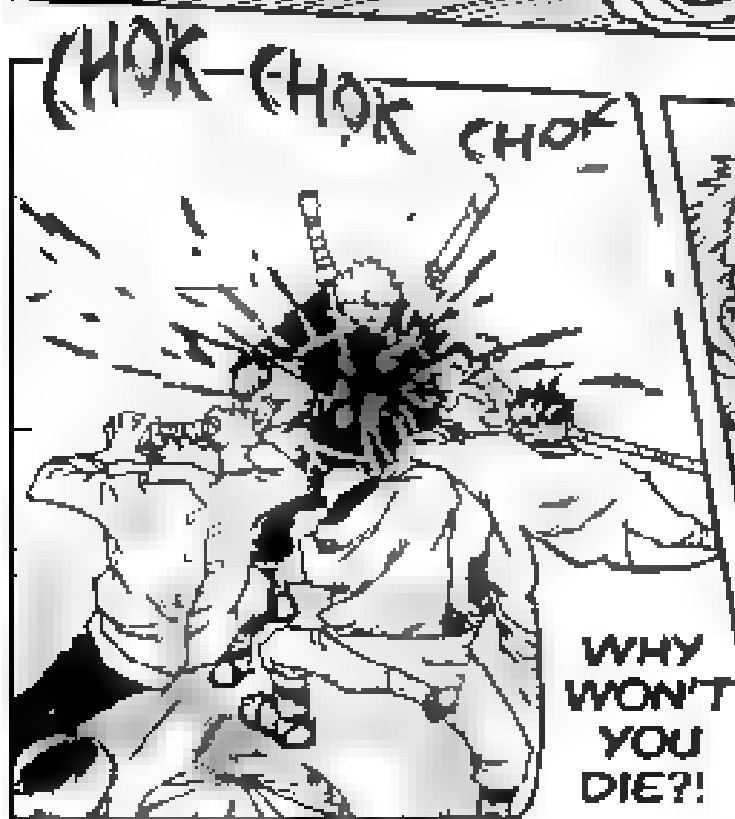
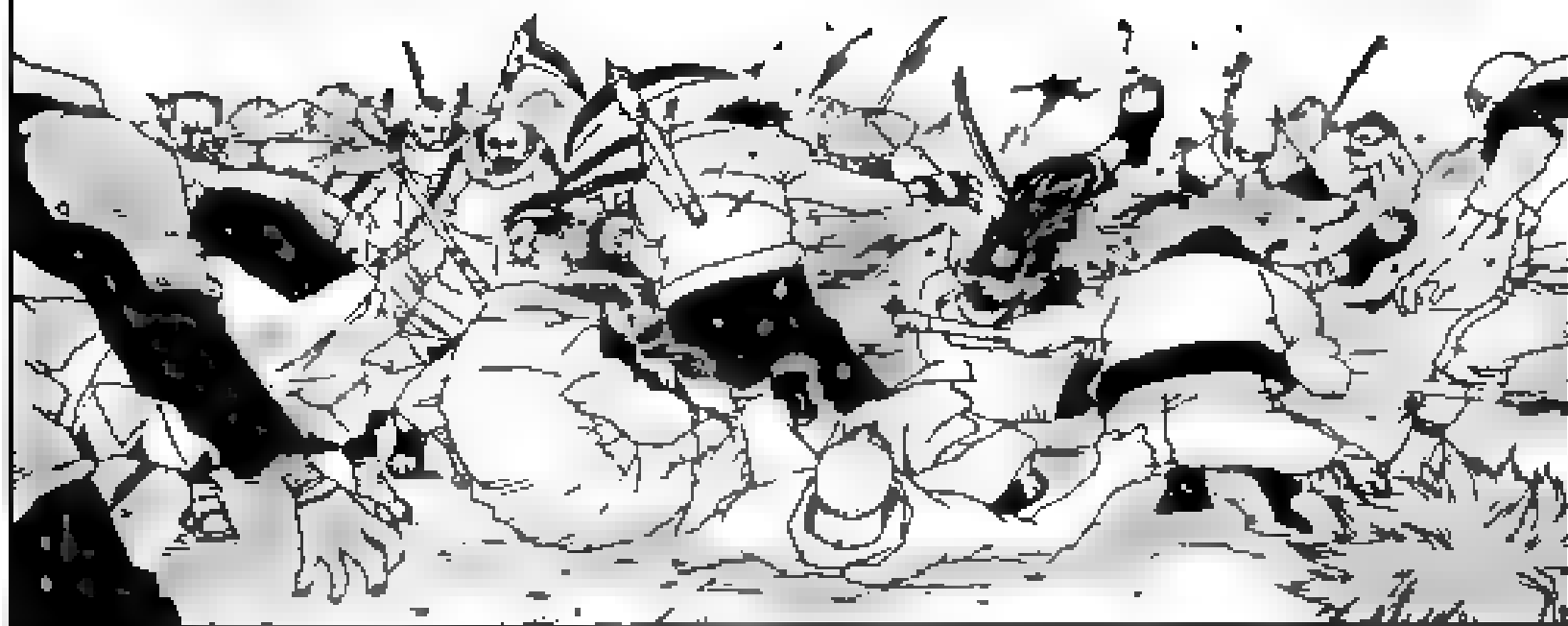
AND
I'VE
LOST.
EVERYTHING.

SAY WHAT WE
WILL, DO WHAT
WE WILL
IN THE END,
WE SHINOBI ARE
STILL JUST
PEOPLE AFTER
ALL... WITH
FEELINGS ALL
TOO HUMAN.











HEH...



WH-
WHAT
ARE
YOU
BABBLING
ABOUT?

JGH...

I
HAVE NO
INTENTION...
OF GOING
TO THE
SAME
PLACE...
AS HAKU.



IF YOU'RE IN
SUCH A HURRY
TO BE REUNITED
WITH YOUR
LITTLE FRIEND...
GO ALONE!



..TO
HELL!!

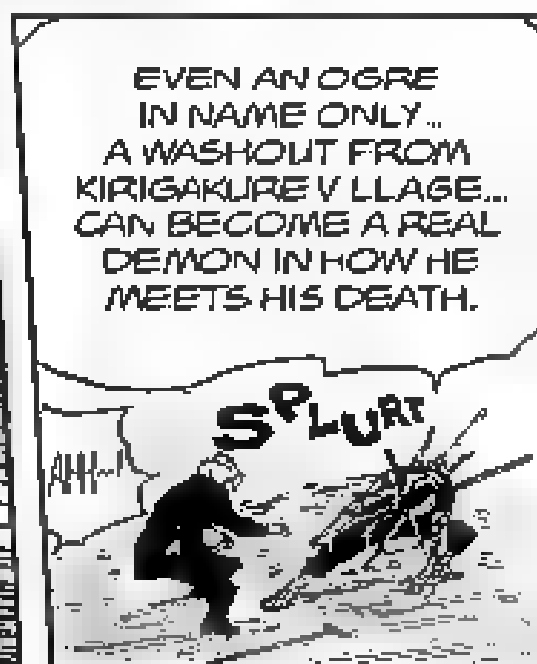
..I'M
TAKING
YOU
WITH
ME.



ONCE WE'RE IN HELL,
I CAN TAKE MY TIME,
AND SHOW YOU OVER...
AND OVER...
WHO IS, OR IS NOT,
"A BABY DEMON"!



AEEEE!



EVEN AN OGRE
IN NAME ONLY...
A WASHOUT FROM
KIRIGAKURE V LLAGE...
CAN BECOME A REAL
DEMON IN HOW HE
MEETS HIS DEATH.

SPURT





EEEEK!!

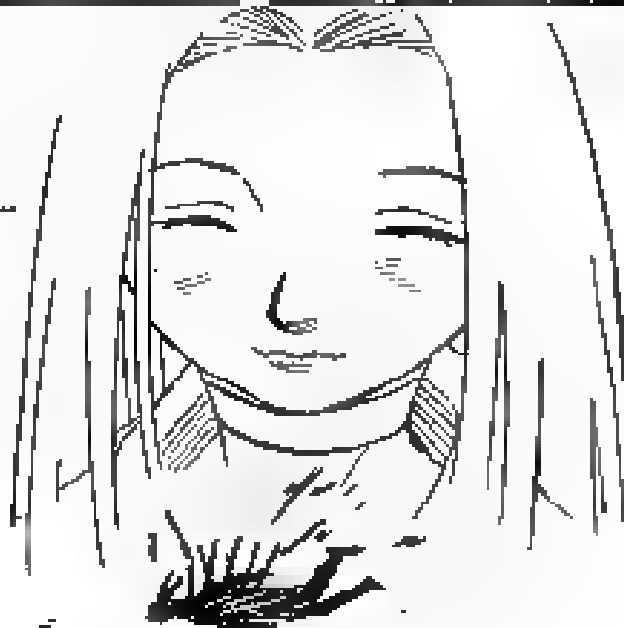


PLEASE...
KEEP
ME
BESIDE
YOU!



THANKS
FOR
EVERYTHING...

AND
I'M
SORRY...



IT'S...
GOODBYE
NOW,
HAKU...



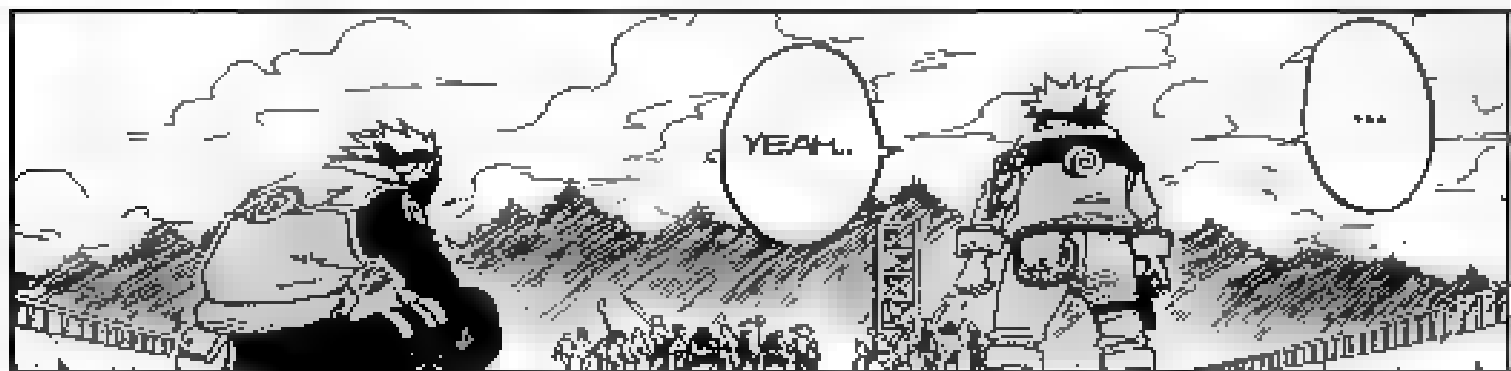
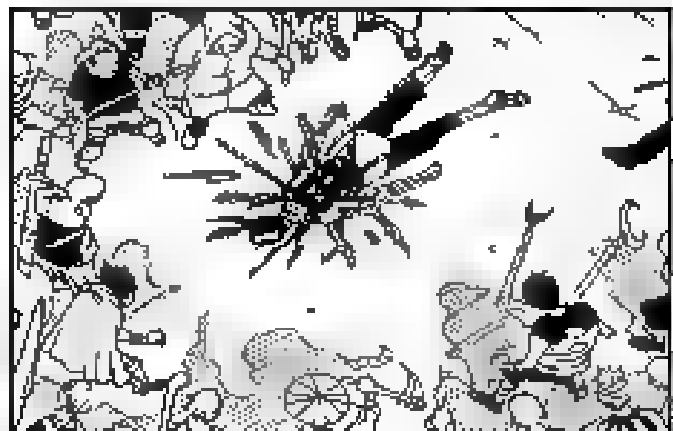
ONCE AGAIN, THE ROUGH SKETCH TO THE LEFT IS FROM ANOTHER REJECTED MANGA. IT WAS A BASEBALL MANGA, TITLED SIMPLY "BASEBALL KING." I PLAYED BASEBALL MYSELF, BACK IN MY STUDENT DAYS, SO I (MAYBE FOOLISHLY) THOUGHT I WOULD TRY MY HAND AT A BASEBALL STORY.

DURING THIS PERIOD, WAS IN A SITUATION WHERE, NO MATTER HOW MANY CONCEPTS FOR ADVENTURE MANGA I SKETCHED OUT, I DIDN'T GET ANY GREEN LIGHTS, SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD GO FOR A SPORTS THEME.

BUT WHEN I ACTUALLY TRIED TO DRAW ONE, PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS WRITING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, IT BECAME A MORE REALISTIC WORK THAN I HAD INTENDED.

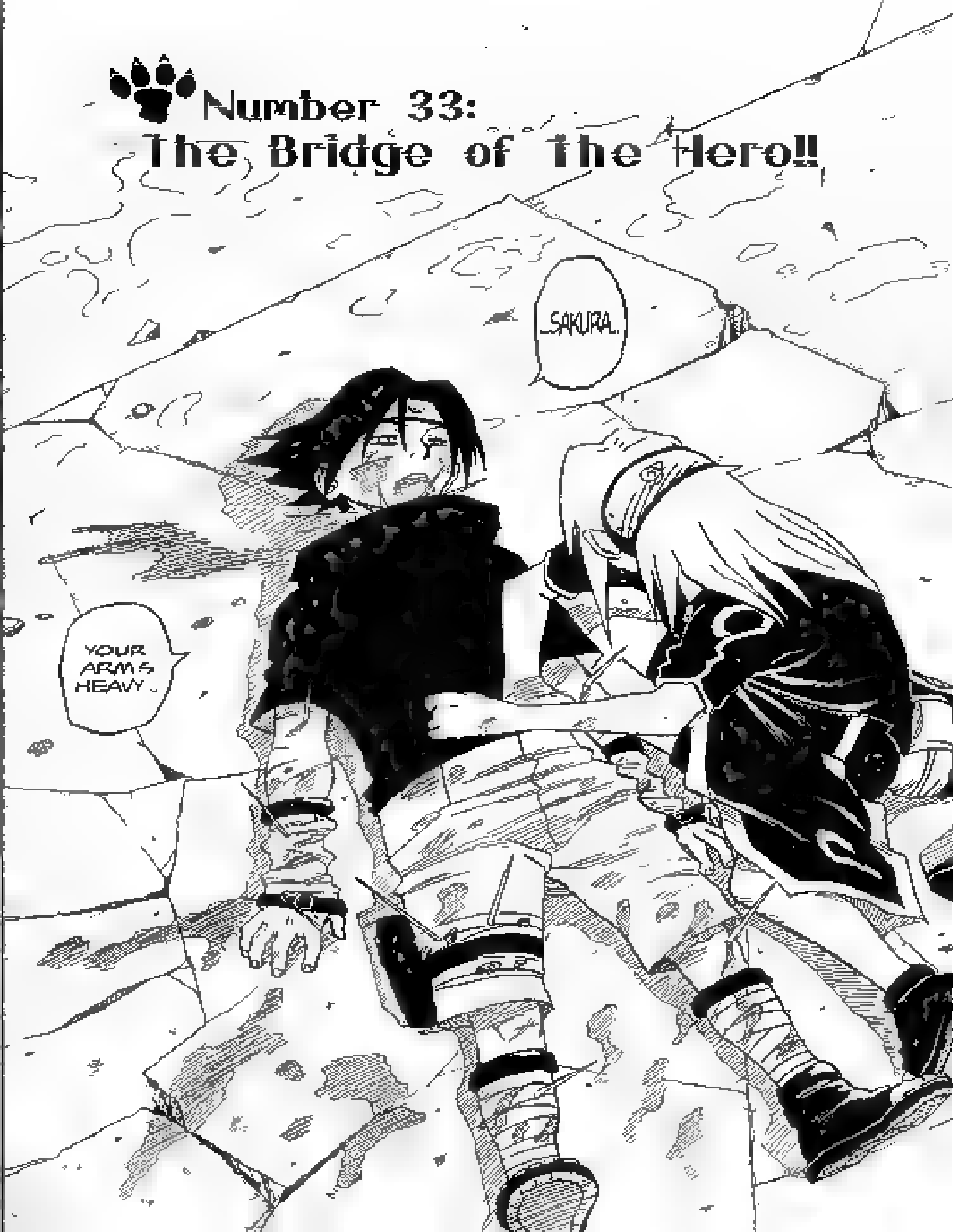
THE REASON IT FAILED WAS THAT IT WAS TOO SERIOUS FOR A SHONEN PUBLICATION. IT WASN'T ENTERTAINMENT

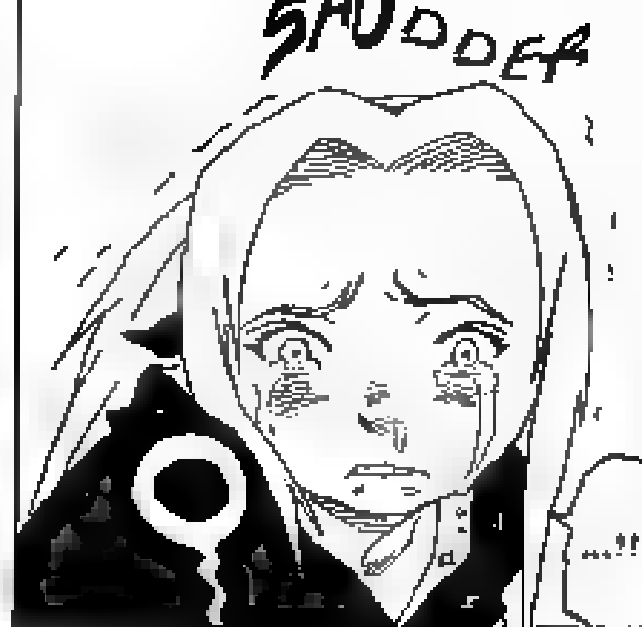
HOWEVER, "BASEBALL KING" ACTUALLY STILL HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART. I SOMETIMES FIND MYSELF THINKING, "THAT WAS SO FUNNY. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S A REJECT, DARN, IT...!"

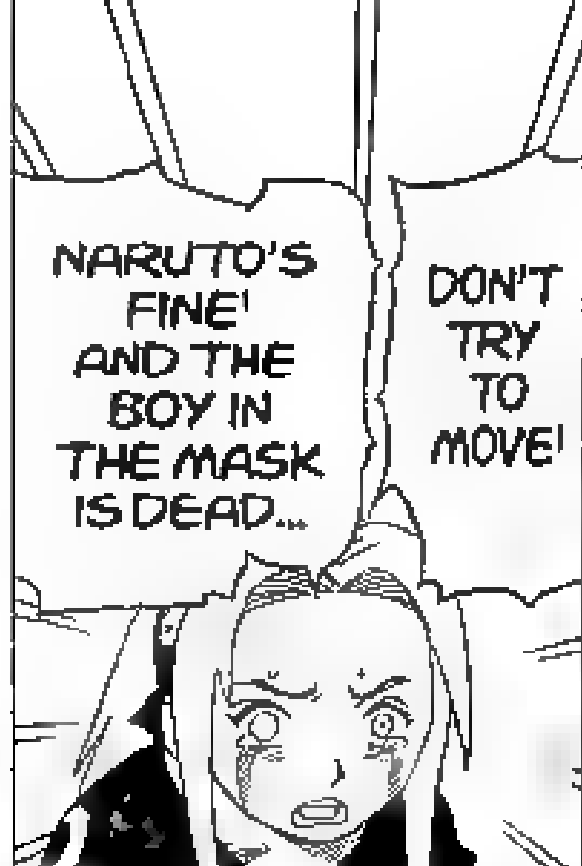




Number 33: The Bridge of the Hero!!







NARUTO'S FINE!
AND THE
BOY IN
THE MASK
IS DEAD...

DON'T
TRY
TO
MOVE!



AND THAT...
LITTLE
CREEP
IN THE
MASK...
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIM?

I'M
ALL
RIGHT
HOW'S
NARUTO?



HMM...



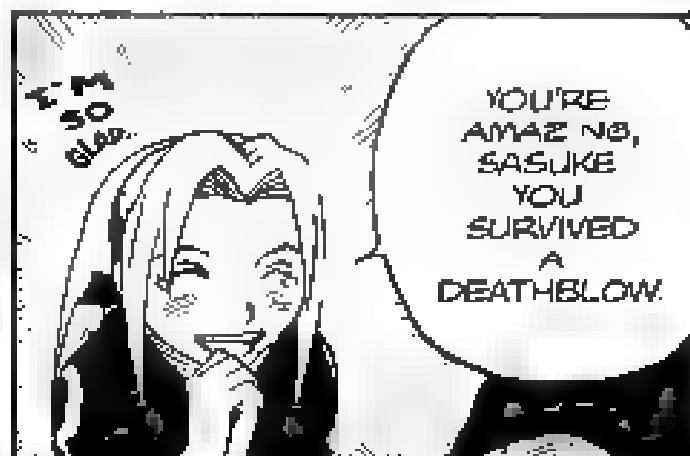
N-
NO...

DID
NARUTO...? DEAD...?

I MEAN... I'M
NOT SURE
DIDN'T SEE
IT VERY WELL
BUT THE BOY
DIED TRYING
TO PROTECT
ZABUZA.



NO...

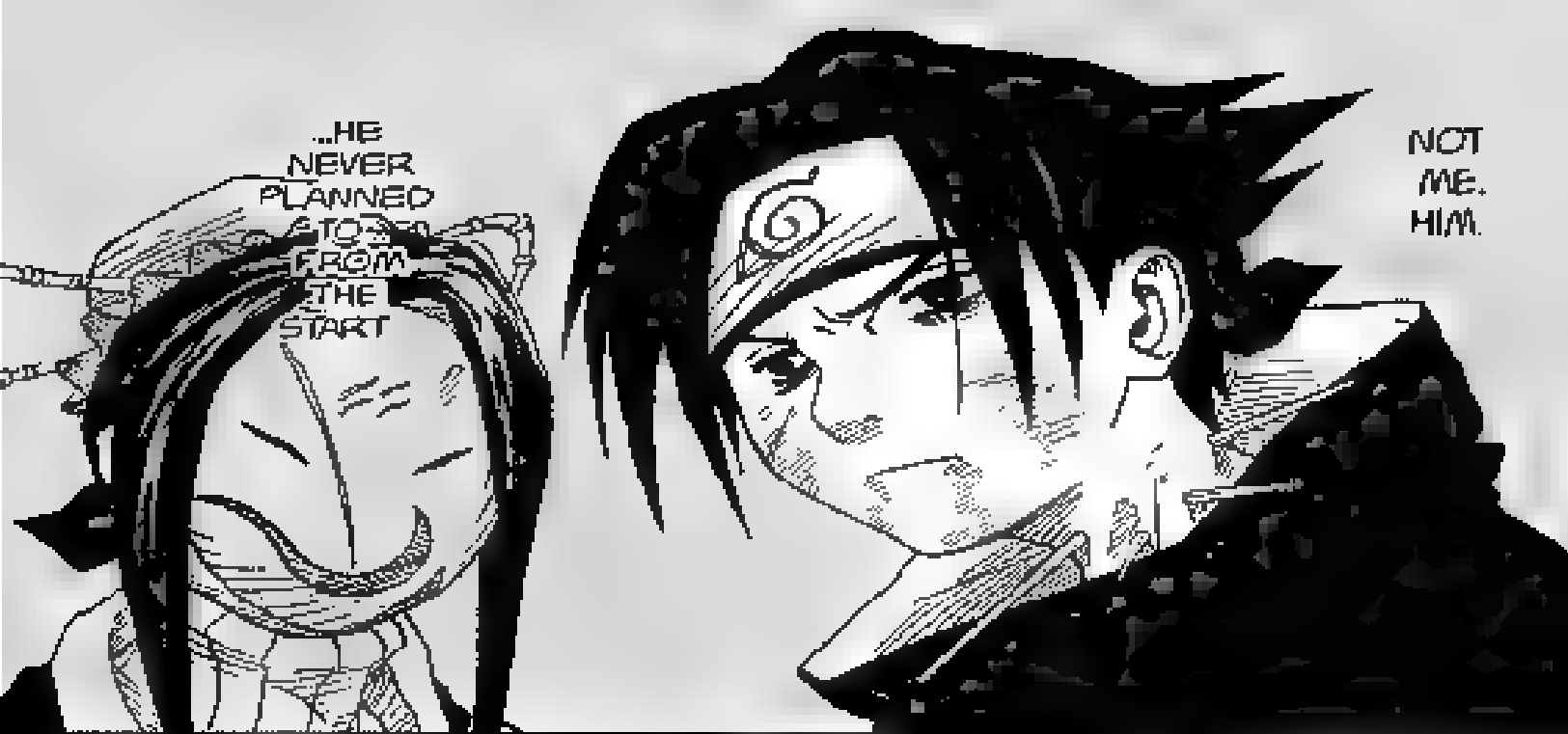


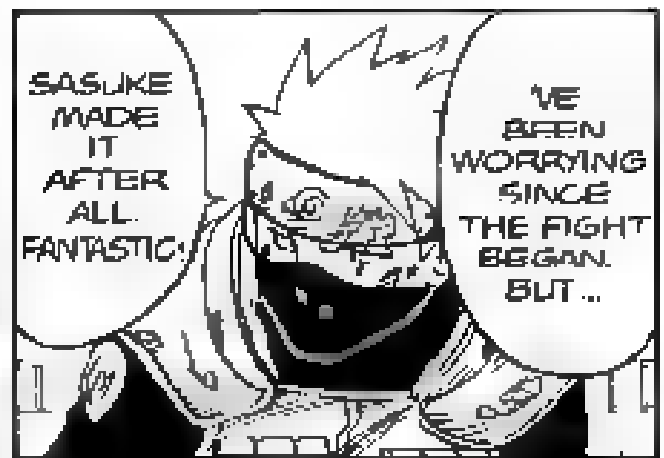
I'M
SO
GLAD...

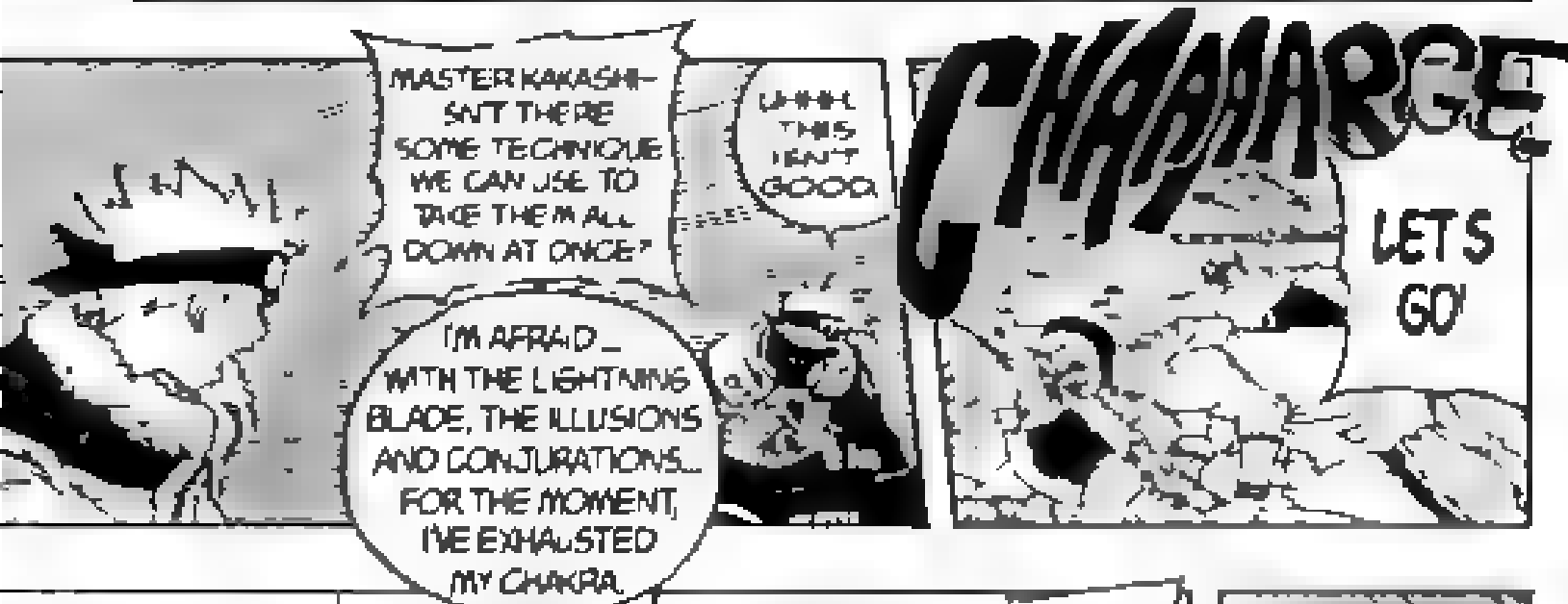
YOU'RE
AMAZING,
SASUKE
YOU
SURVIVED
A
DEATHBLOW.



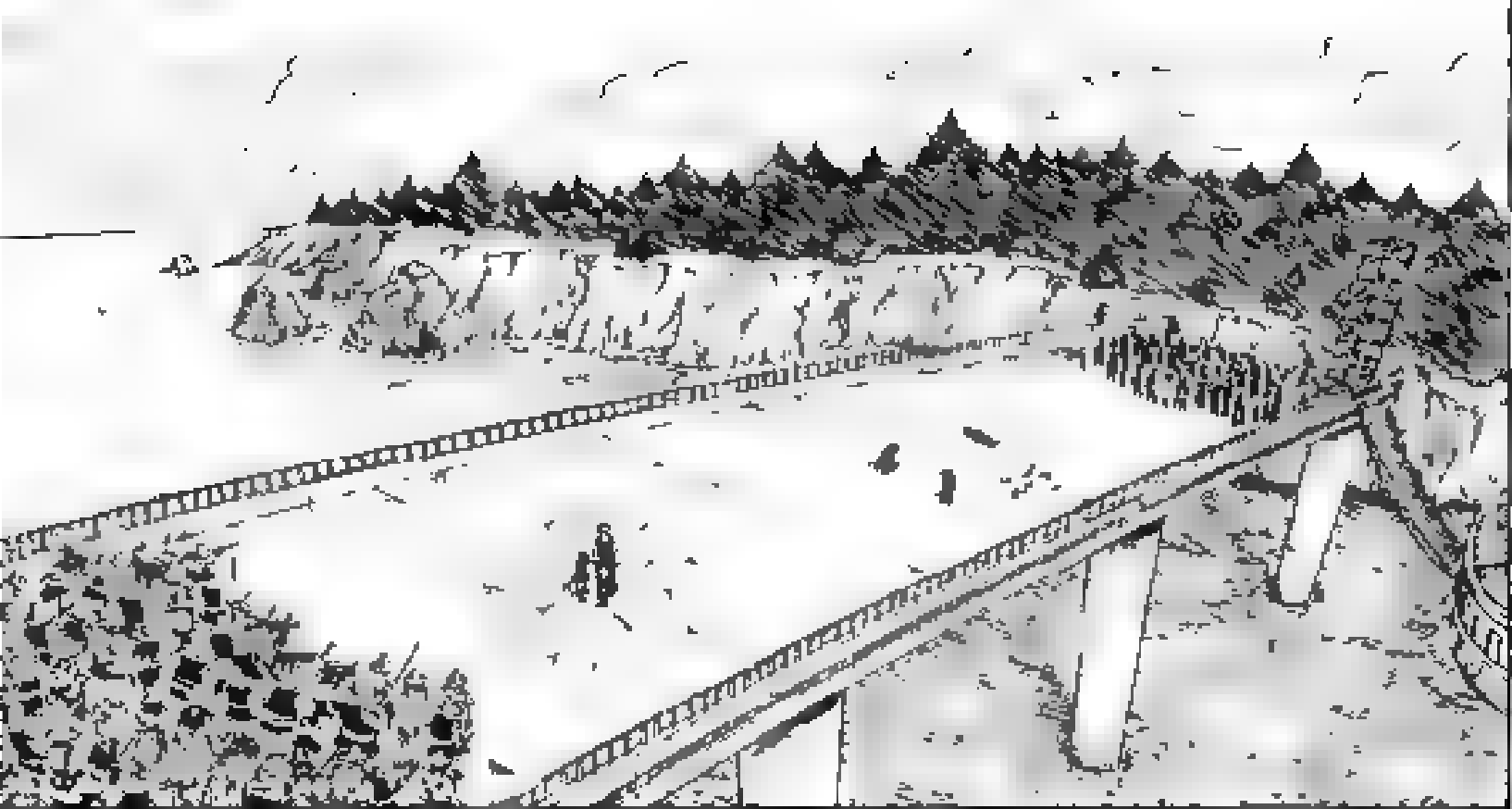
I WAS
AFRAID...
THOUGHT...



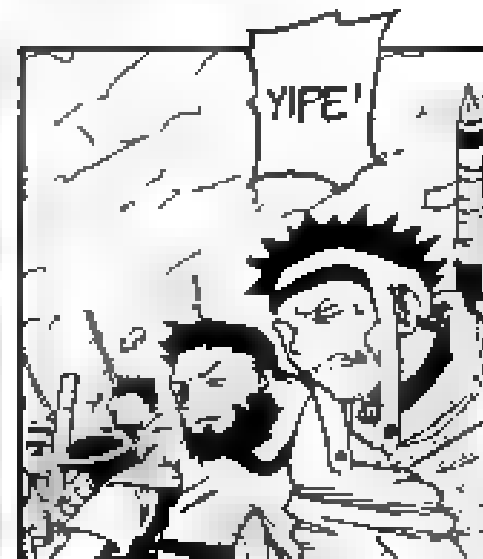
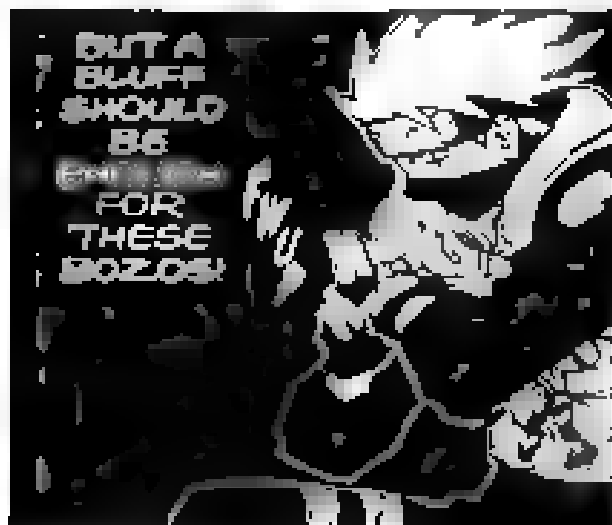




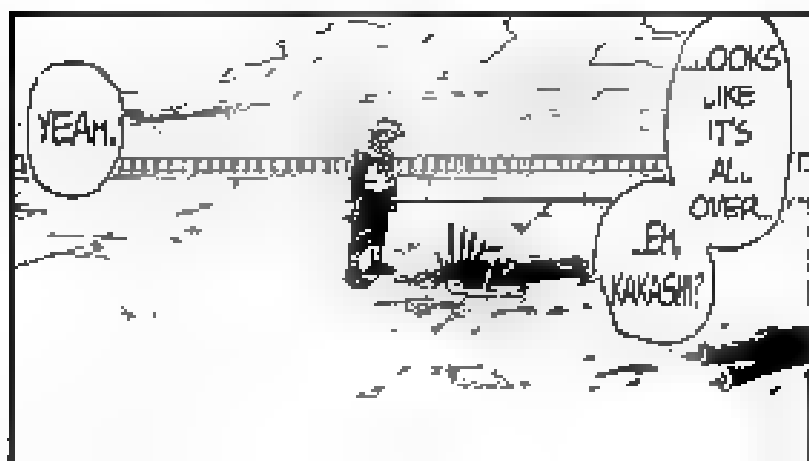
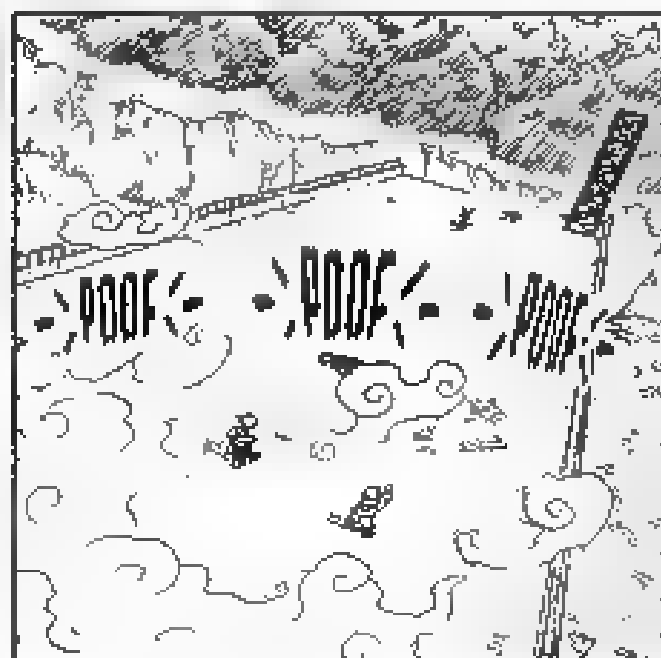


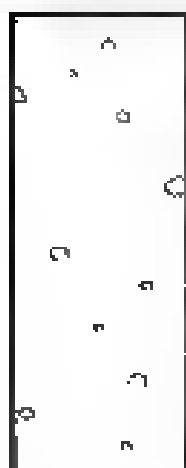
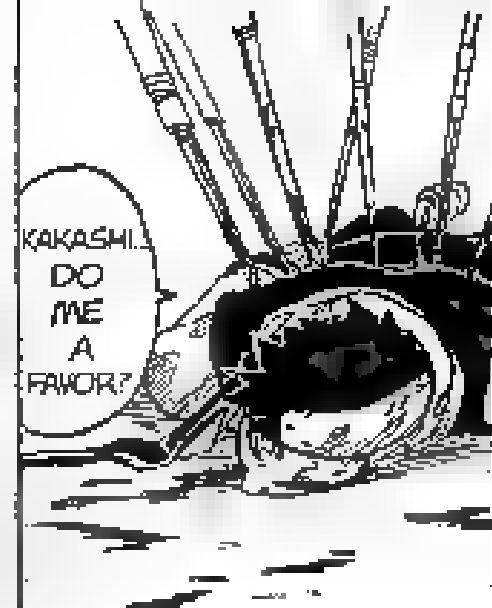
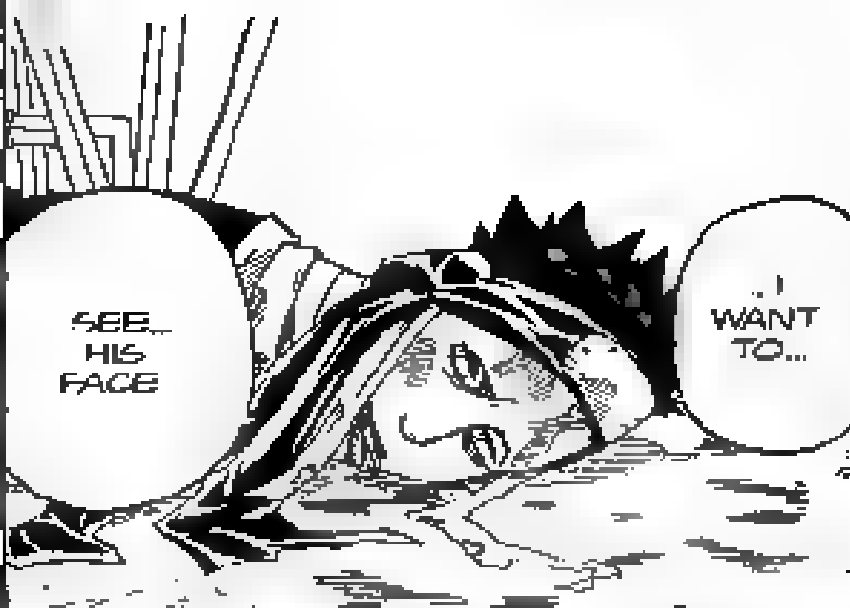


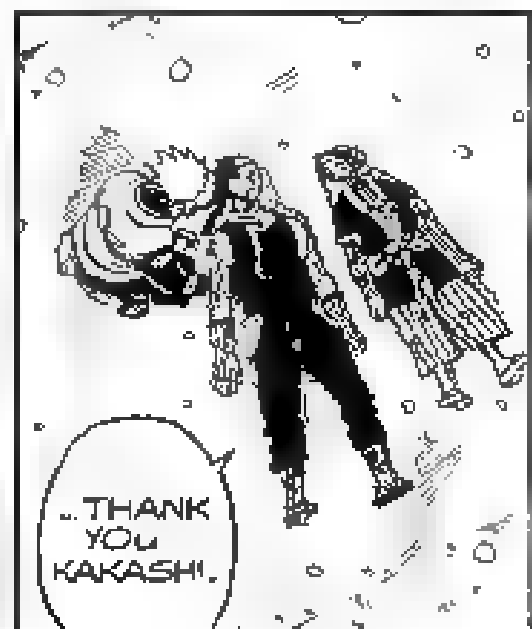
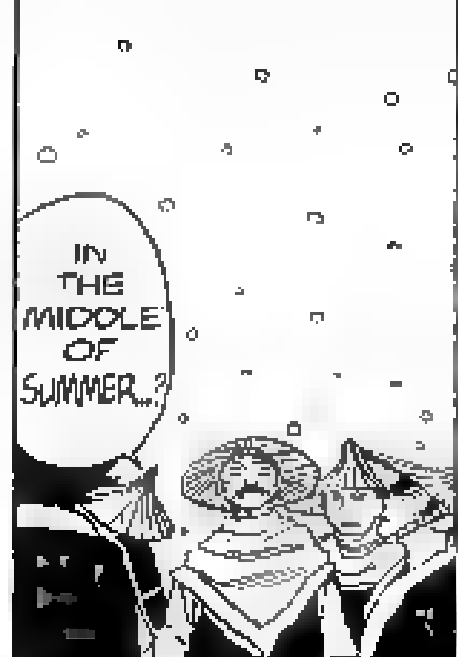
ONNING



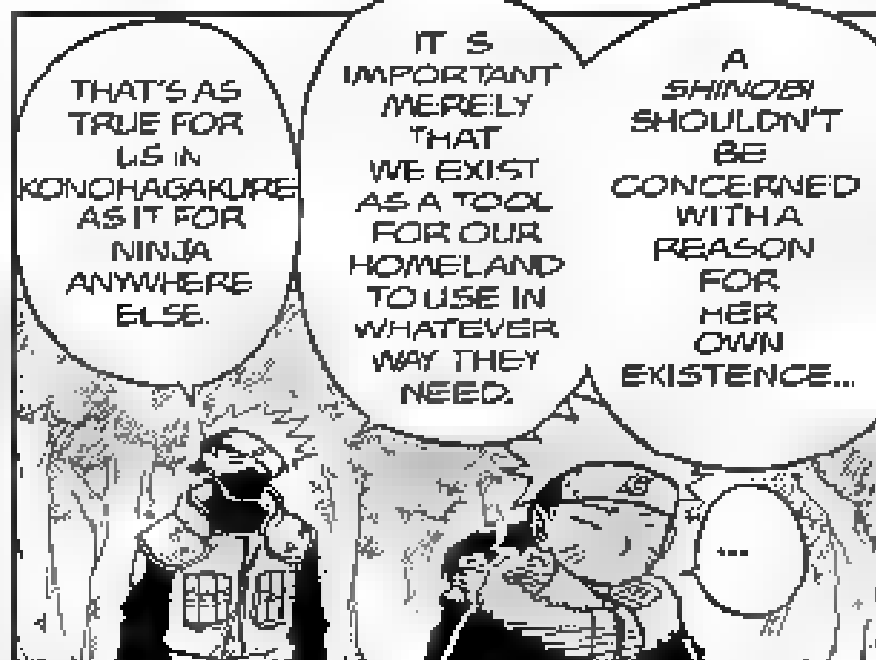


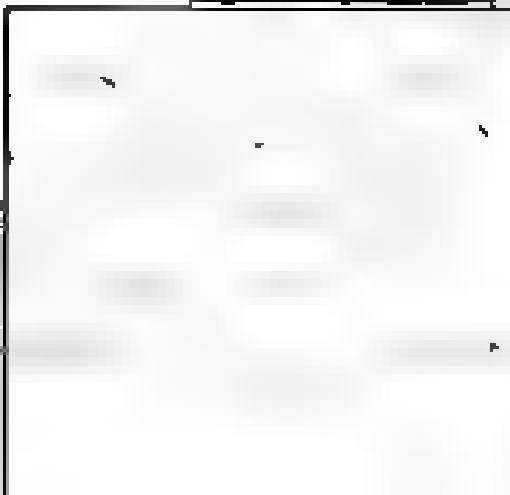
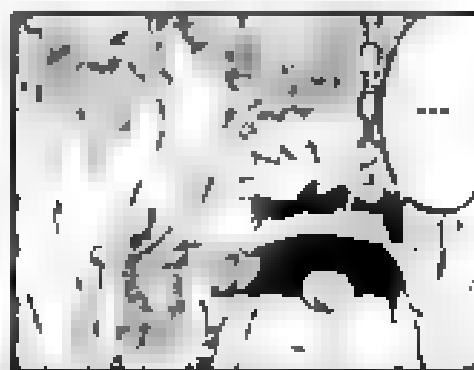
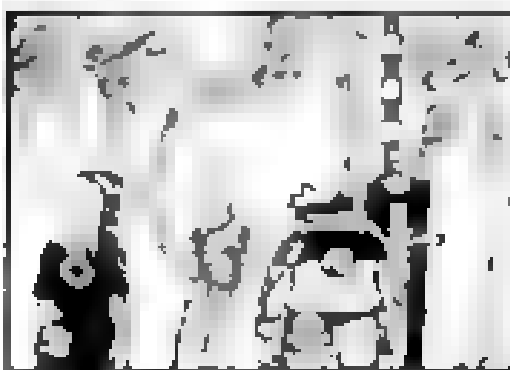
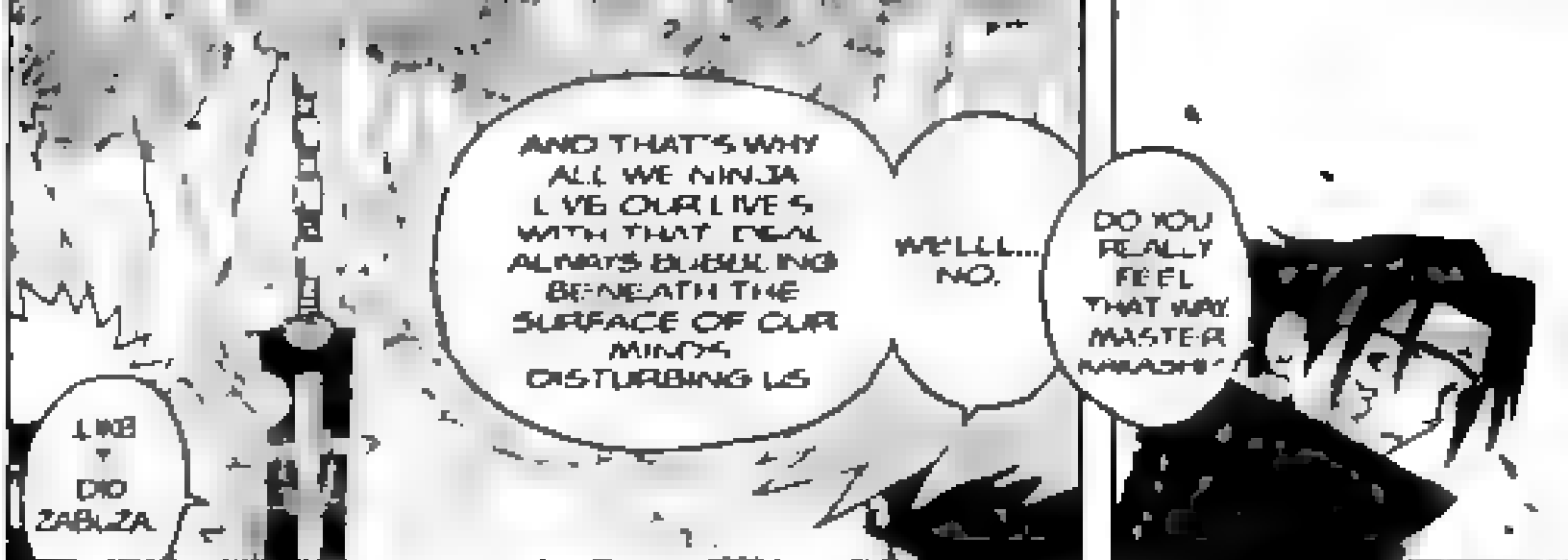


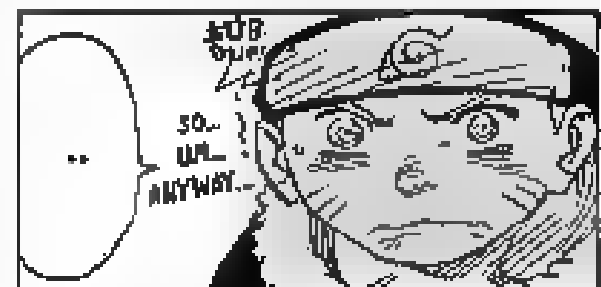
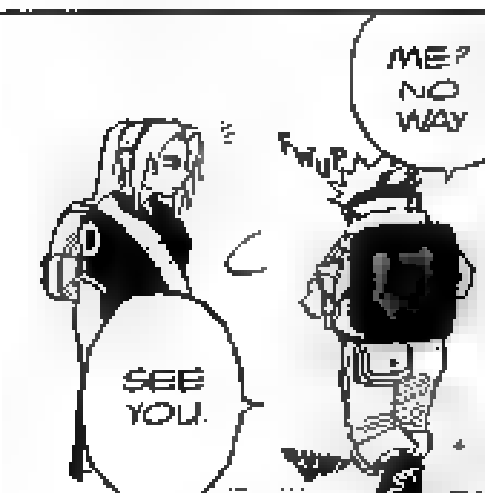
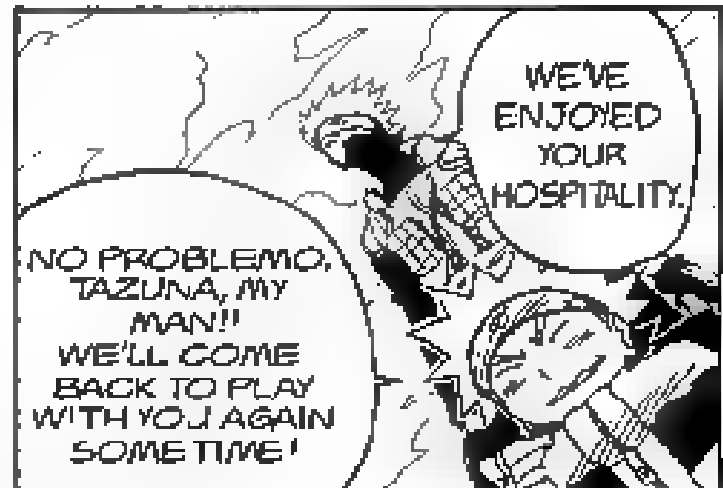
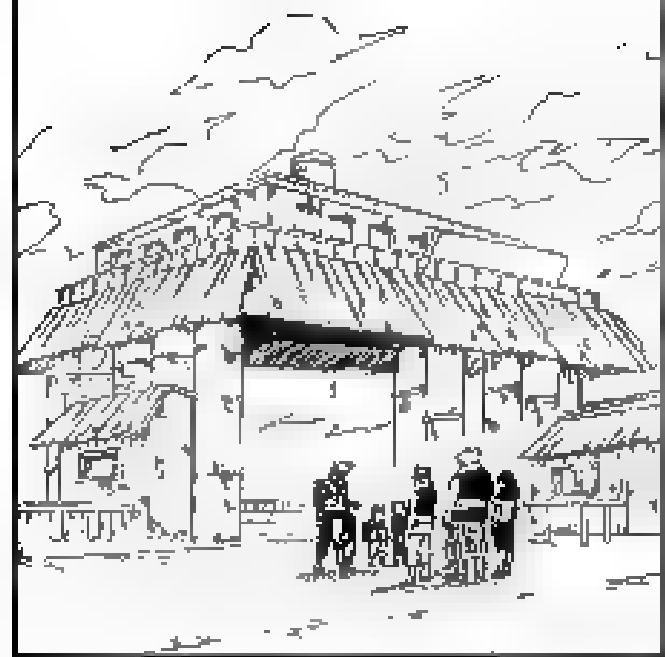
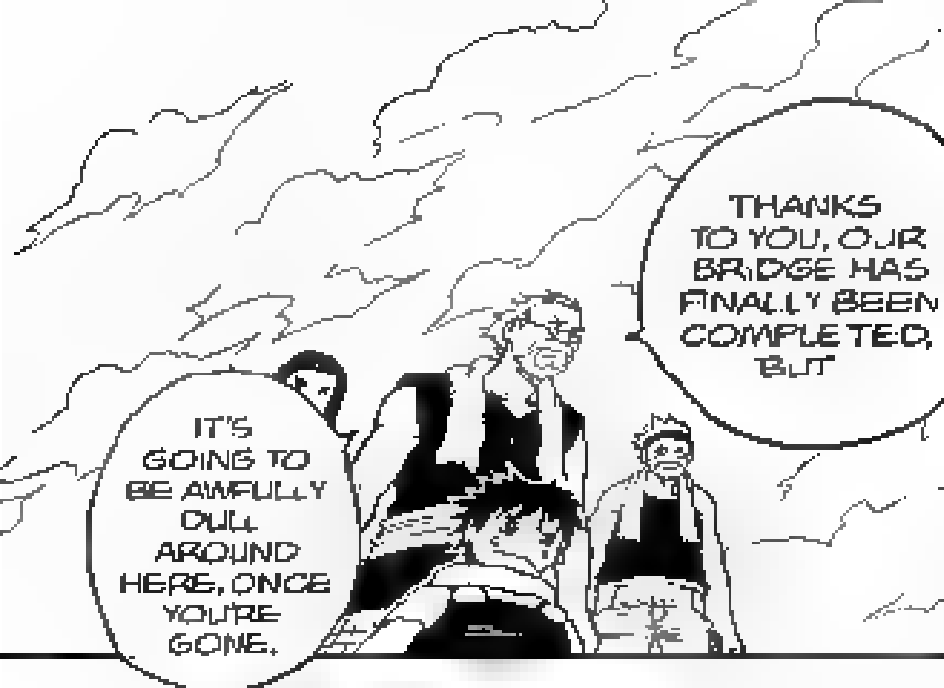


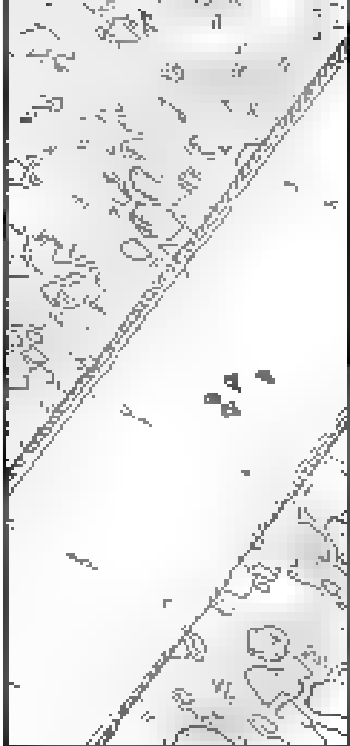








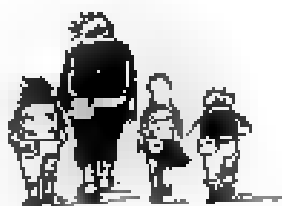




AND THERE'S ONLY NAME THAT WILL TRULY FIT

AND SPEAKING OF BRIDGES, WE STILL HAVE TO OFFICIALLY DEDICATE THIS ONE

WHAT ARE GOING TO CALL IT?



NARUTO BUILT THE BRIDGE THAT EVENTUALLY CARRIED US ALL TO HOPE AND COURAGE!

THAT BOY TOUCHED LITTLE INARI'S HEART AND INARI TOUCHED THE HEARTS OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN OUR CITY

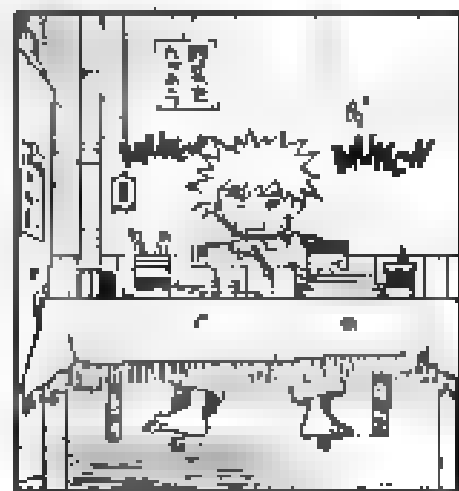
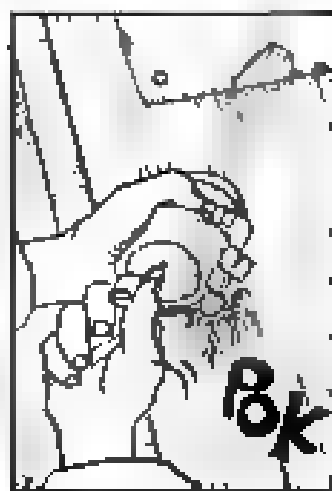






Number 34: Intruders?

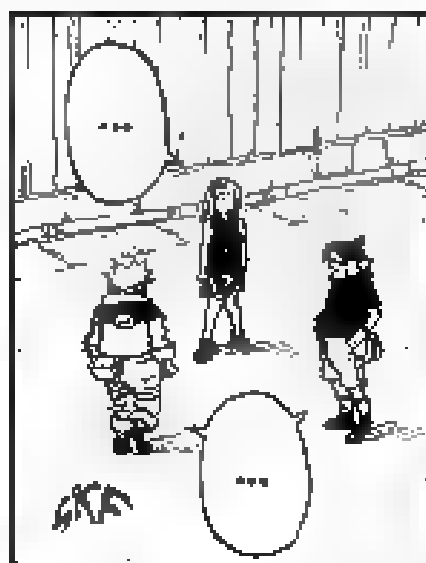
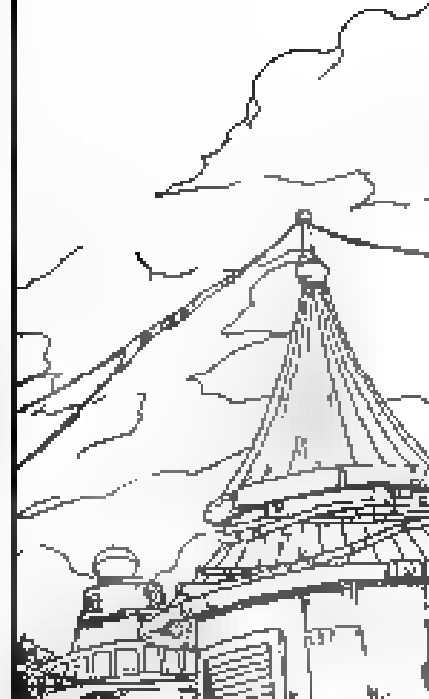




START
YOUR
ENGINES!!
MACH 5!!



WOO-HOO!
NO
MATTER
WHAT
TODAY'S
MISSION IS,
I'LL HAVE
THE ENERGY
TO FACE
IT NOW!



YOUR NOSE IS GROWING, MASTER!!!

YOU ALWAYS LAY IT ON TOO THICK,

GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE

THREE HOURS LATER.

I'M AFRAID I GOT LOST ON THE WAY HERE...

AS WITH RECEPTIONS FOR THE ONE SUITE

WE WANT ACTION! A CHALLENGE! SOMETHING WHERE I COULD USE MY SKILL - LIKE THIS... AND THIS... AND - AND -

OH, REALLY?

I SEE WHERE YOU'RE COMING WITH THIS

SIZZLE

HEY, MASTER KAKASH! ANY HOT NEW MISSIONS FOR THE 7TH CELL? WE'VE HAD NOTHING BUT GIMMES! BORRRRING.

SAVING YOU IS SUCH A NUISANCE, SASUKE!

THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL YOU!

IT'S OVER, AS OF NOW!

TAK

WOULD YOU CHILL?!

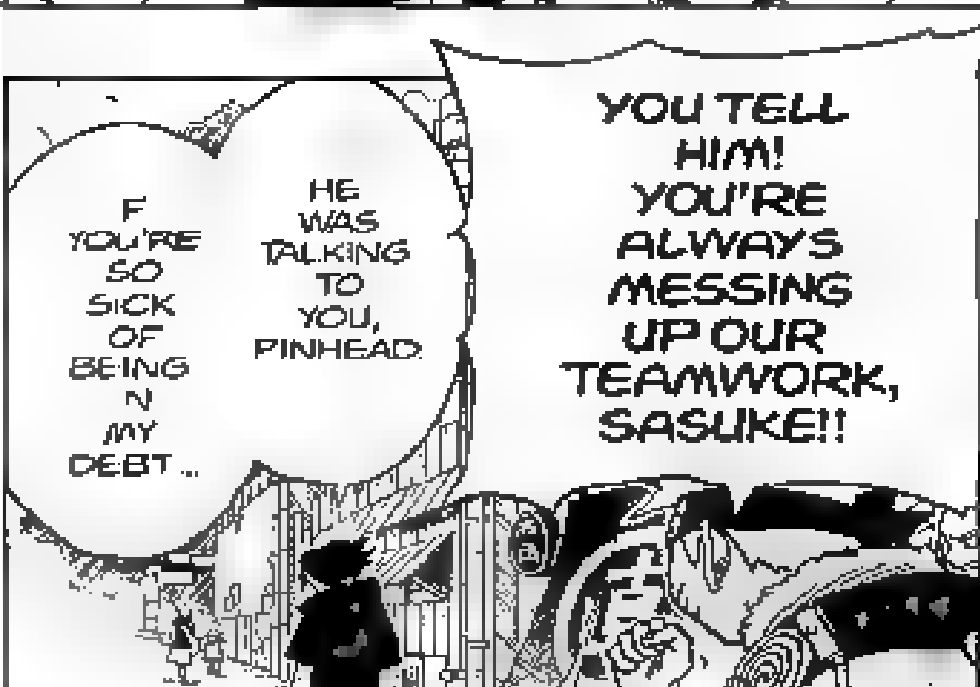
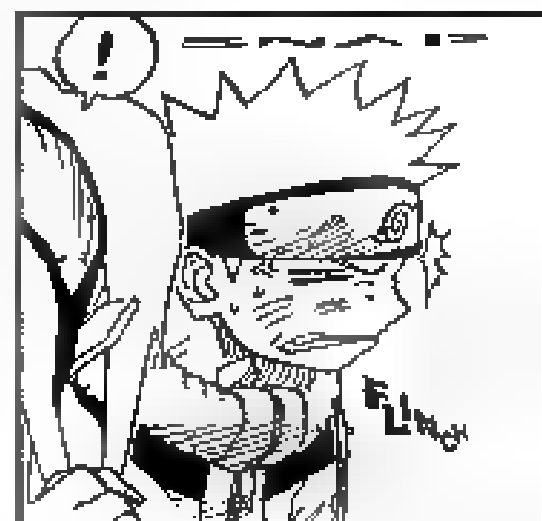
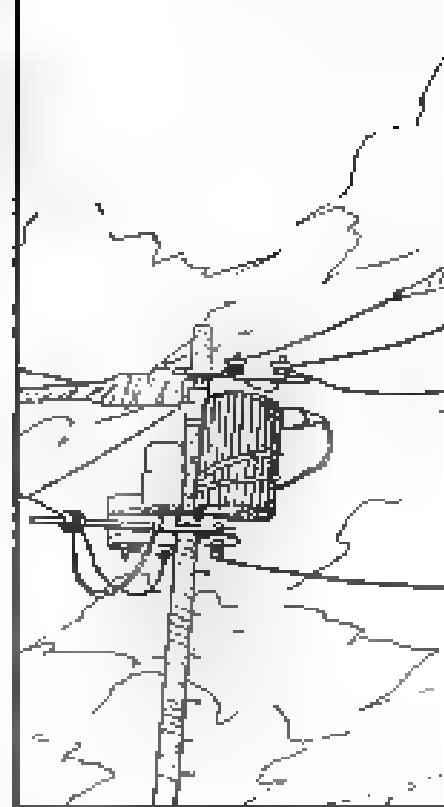
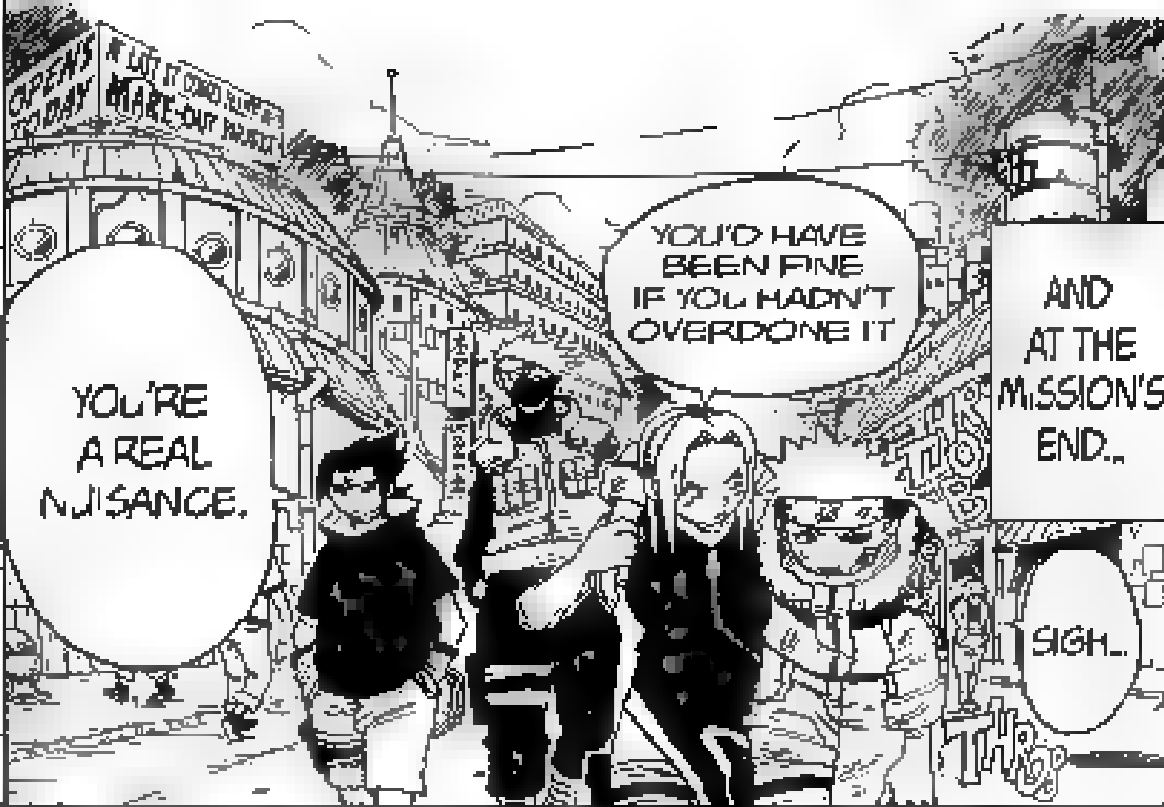
YESSIR!

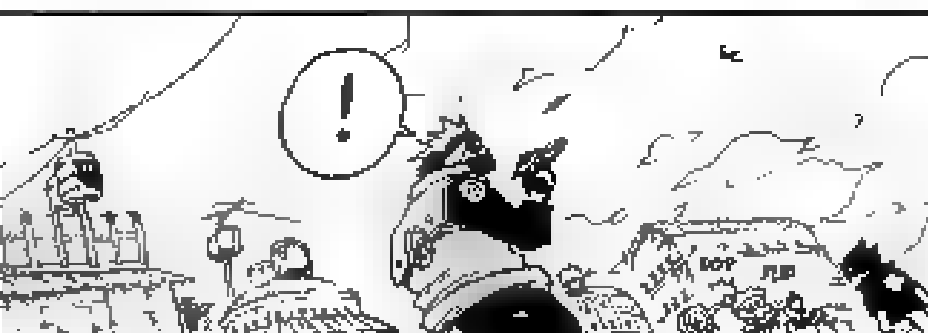
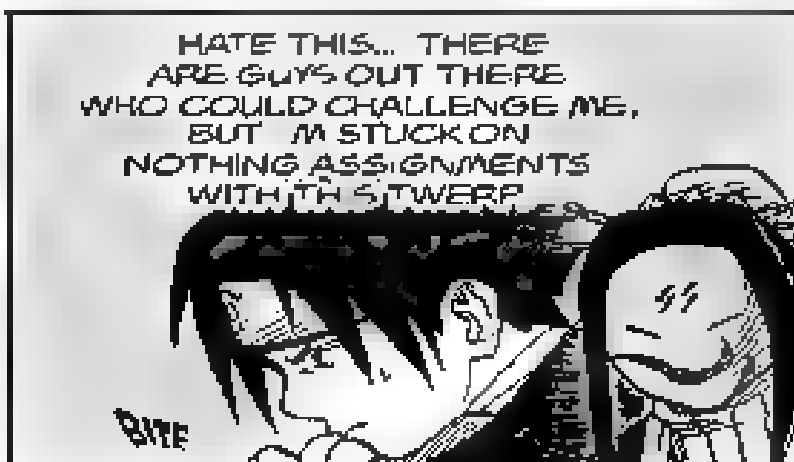
HEY, NARUTO! WAKE UP! WE'RE HEADING OUT ON OUR MISSION!

EVERY TIME WE GO ON A MISSION THEY END UP SAVING ME UP AND SAVING ME BUT NOT THIS TIME!

GRR... THOSE TWO...

DOPE.

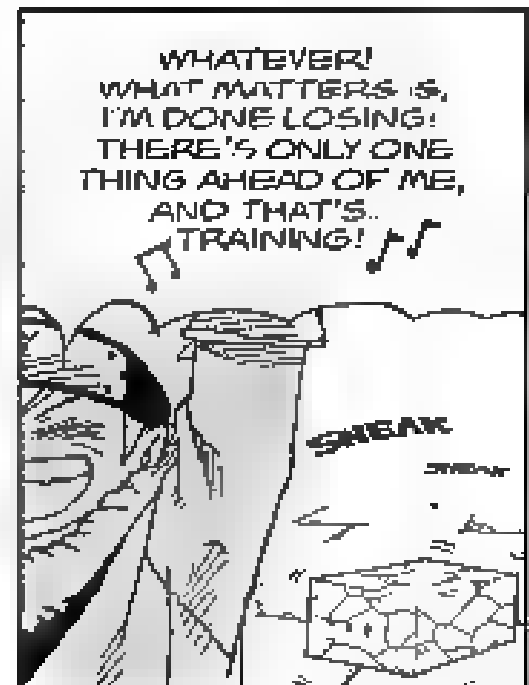
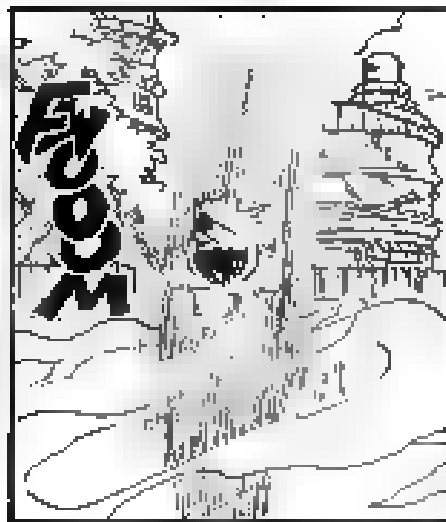
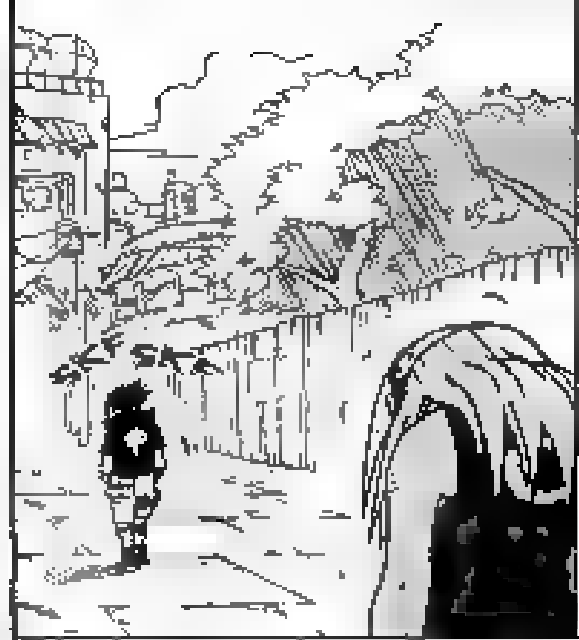






'CAUSE I'M
ALWAYS
THE WEAKEST...
THE ONE WITH
ALMOST NO
SPECIAL
SKILLS!

HE'S RIGHT...
IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHAT
OUR MISSION IS.
THEY'RE ALL
THE SAME
TO ME...



LITTLE HINT...
NO ROCK HAS
PERFECT ANGLES,
PERFECT CORNERS..
AND EYE HOLES.
KIND OF A BIG CLUE

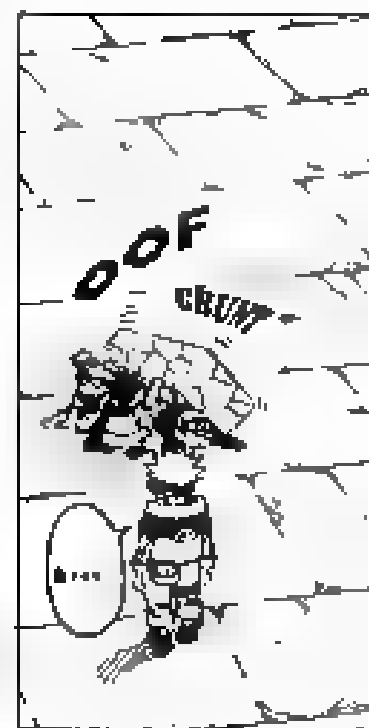


PSYCH!!
FAKED
YOU
OUT,
ROCK!!!

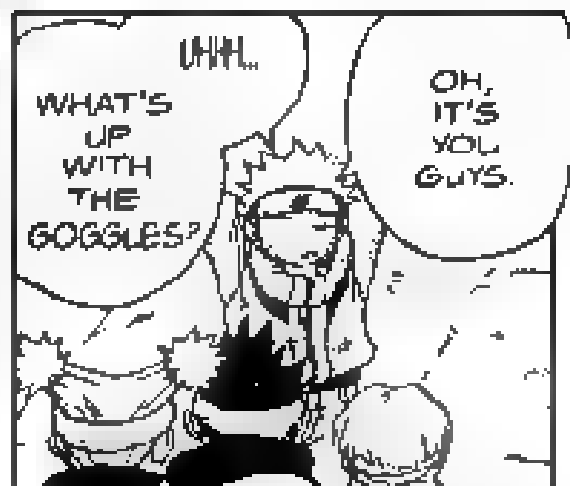


TA-DAAAAA

LEAVE IT
TO THE
MAN
I HAVE
ACKNOWLEDGED
AS BEING
ALMOST
MY EQUAL!
YOUR
SKILLS
RIVAL
MY OWN!!



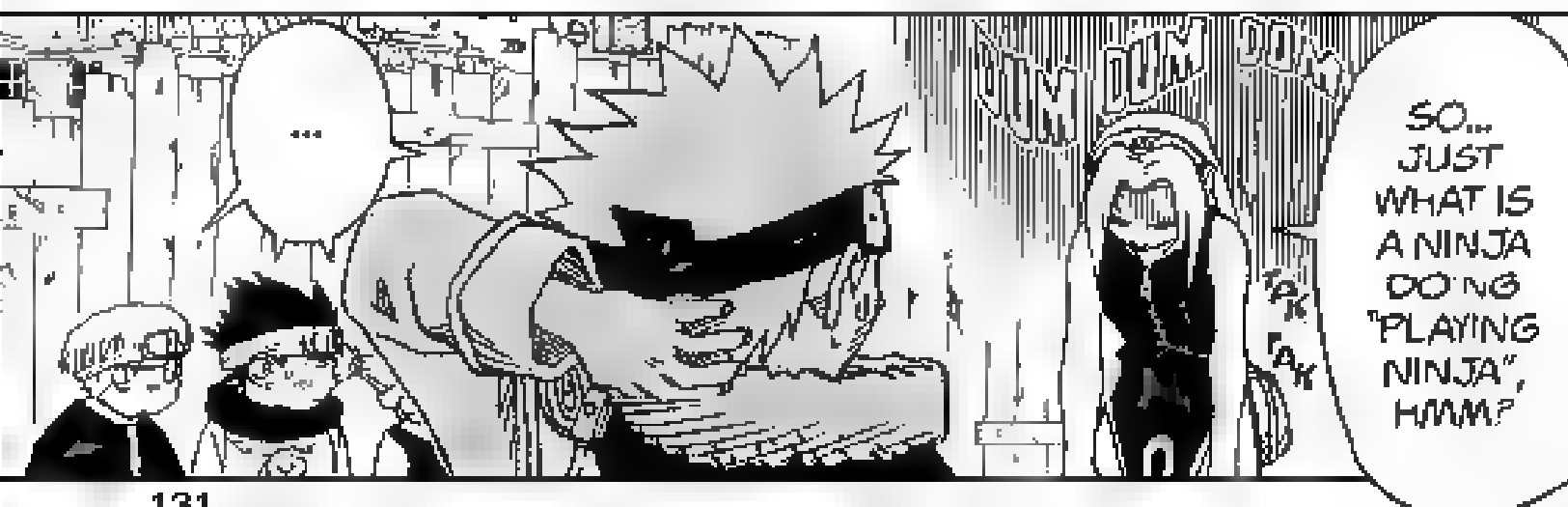
HEH HEH
HEH
YOU'RE
OUR
IDOL,
RIGHT?
WE'RE
COPYING
THE
STYLE YOU
USED
TO WEAR.

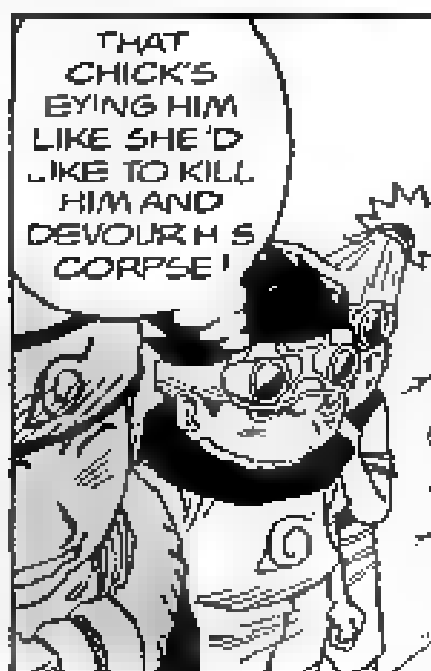
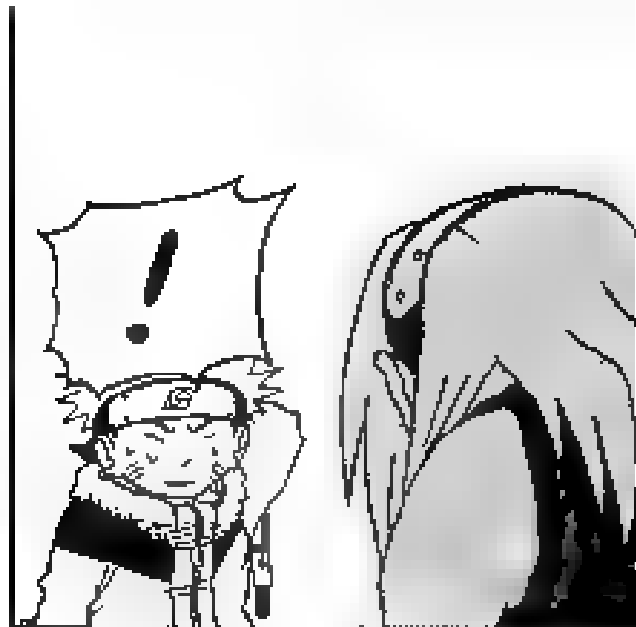
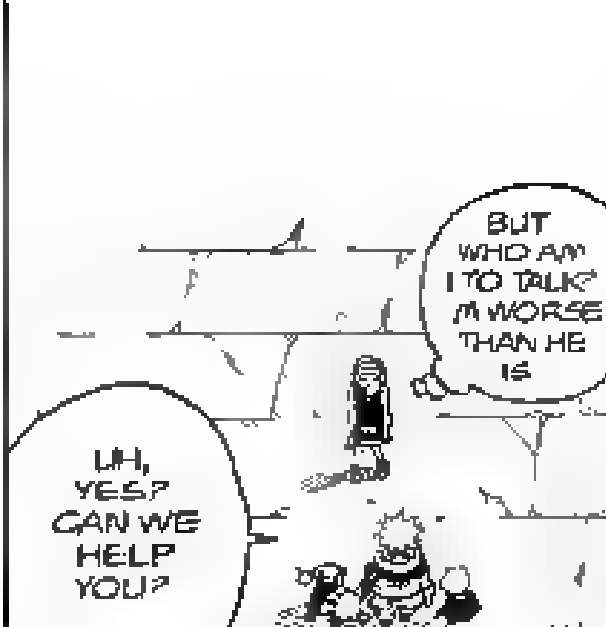


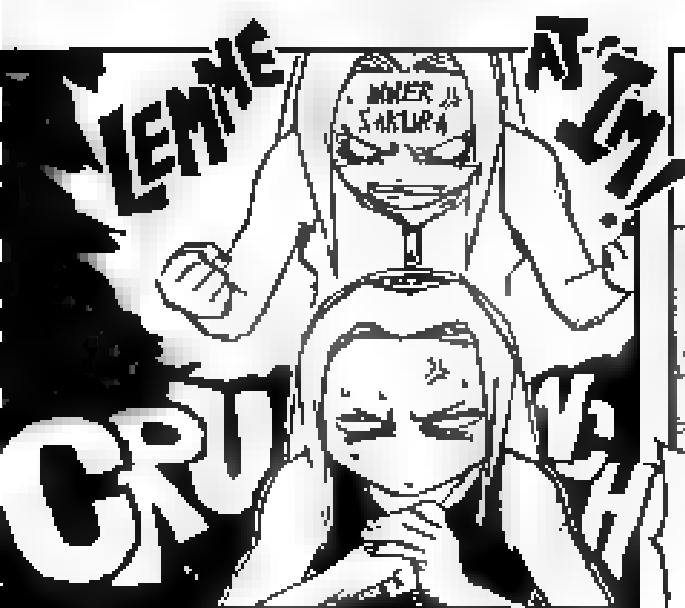
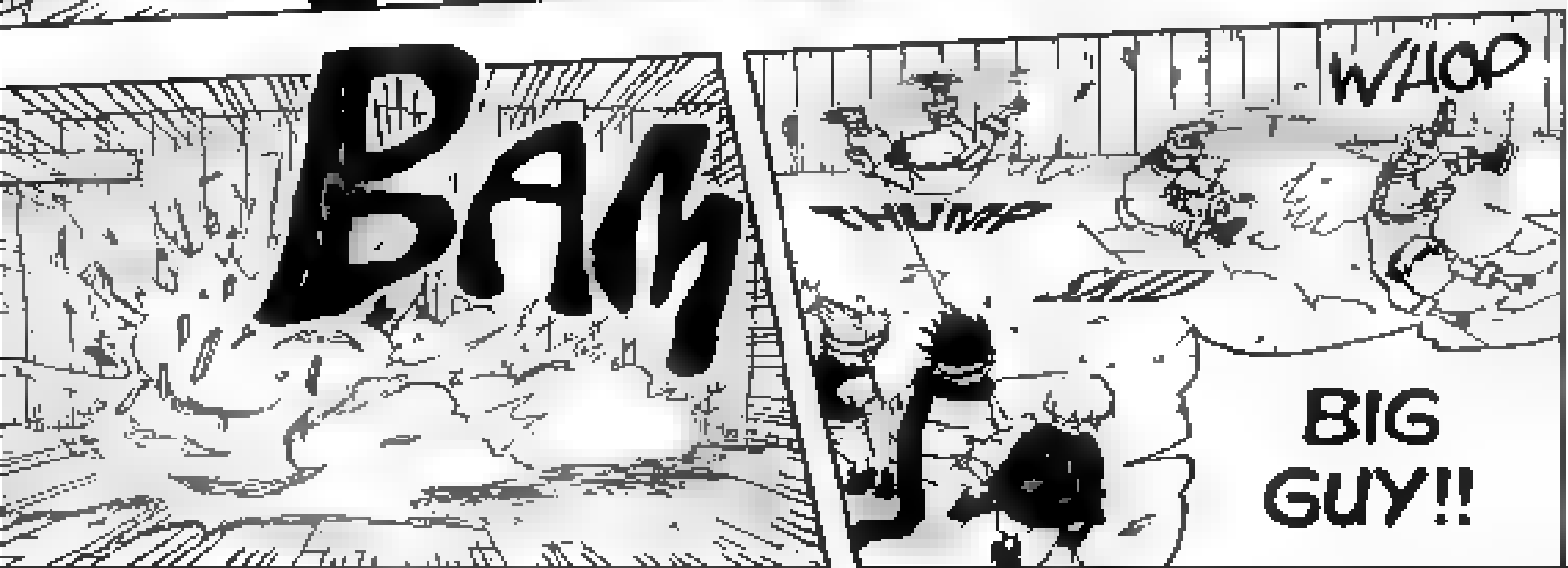
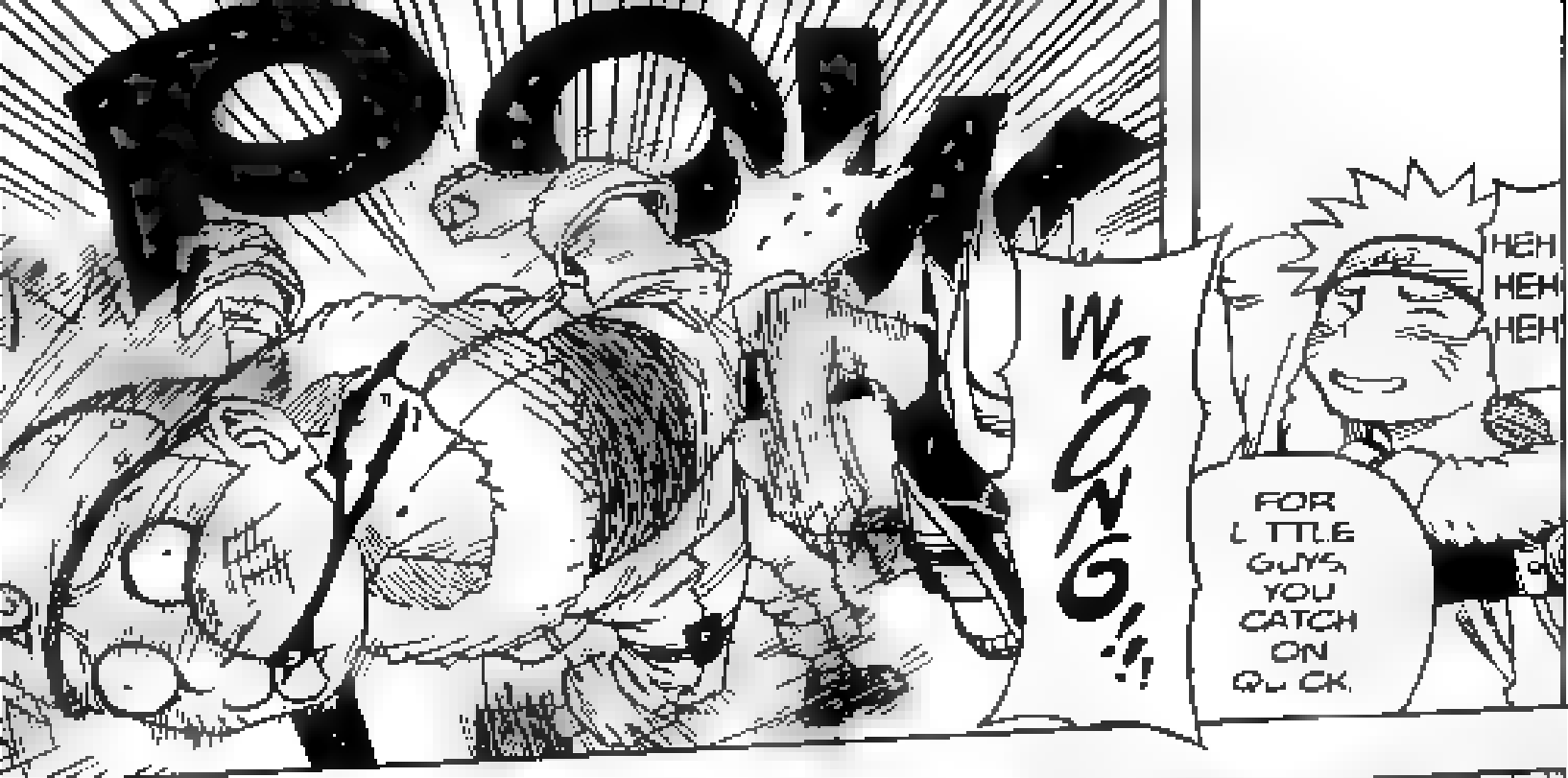
UHH...

WHAT'S
UP
WITH
THE
GOOGLES?

OH,
IT'S
YOU
GUYS.

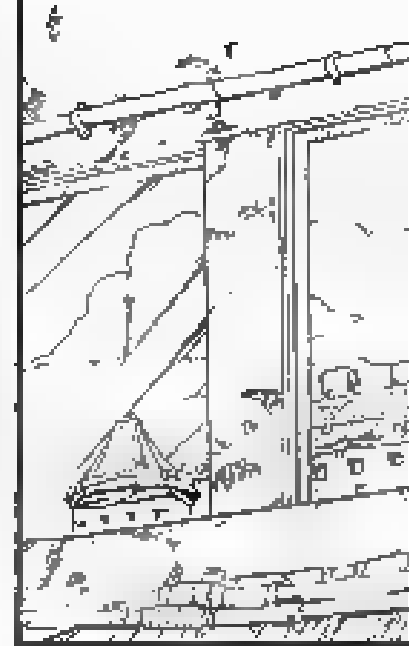




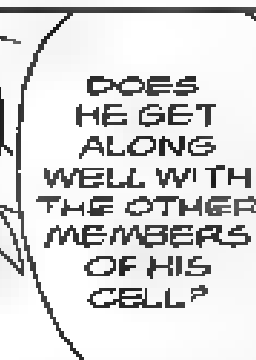




THANKS
FOR YOUR
LATEST
REPORT,
MASTER
KAKASHI.



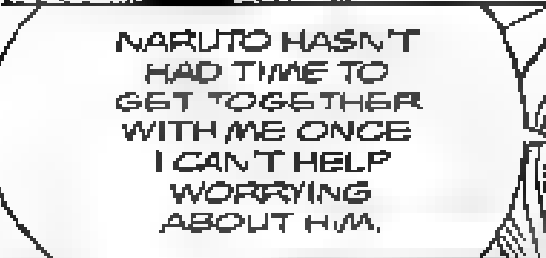
HE'S...
GETTING
THERE.



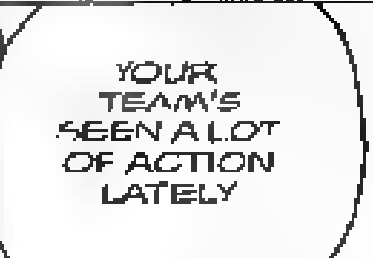
DOES
HE GET
ALONG
WELL WITH
THE OTHER
MEMBERS
OF HIS
CELL?



HOW'S
OUR
LITTLE
HELLION?



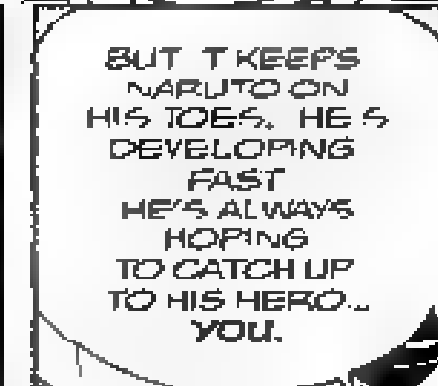
NARUTO HASN'T
HAD TIME TO
GET TOGETHER
WITH ME ONCE
I CAN'T HELP
WORRYING
ABOUT HIM.



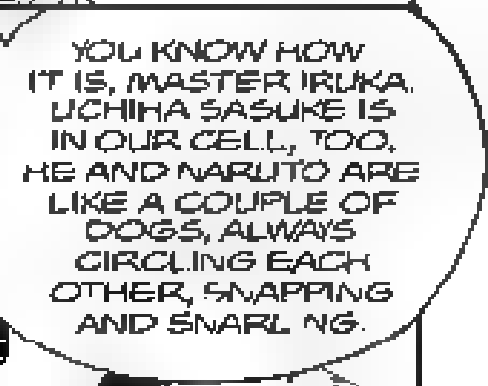
YOUR
TEAM'S
SEEN A LOT
OF ACTION
LATELY



REALLY?

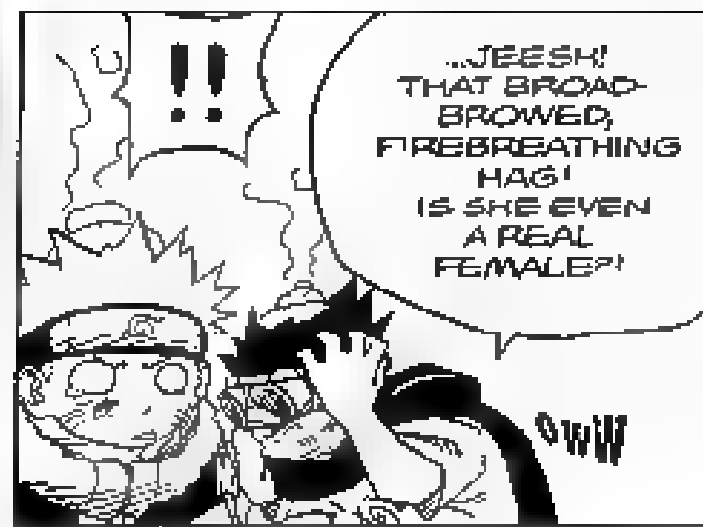
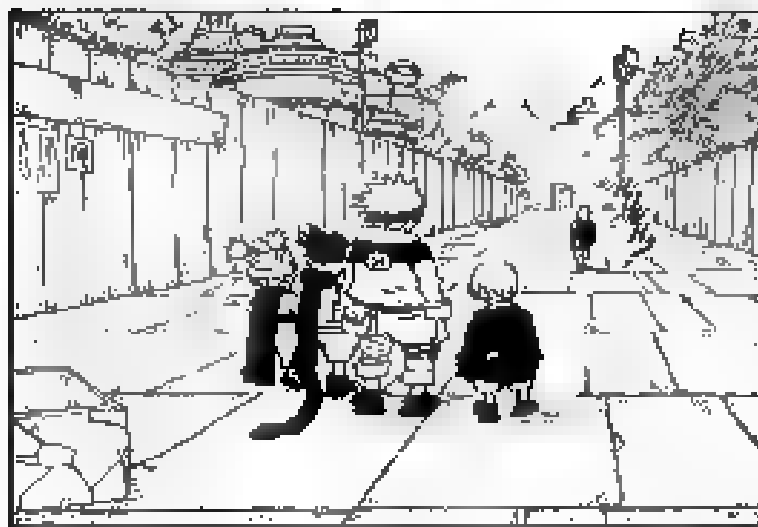


BUT T KEEPS
NARUTO ON
HIS TOES. HE'S
DEVELOPING
FAST
HE'S ALWAYS
HOPING
TO CATCH UP
TO HIS HERO...
YOU.

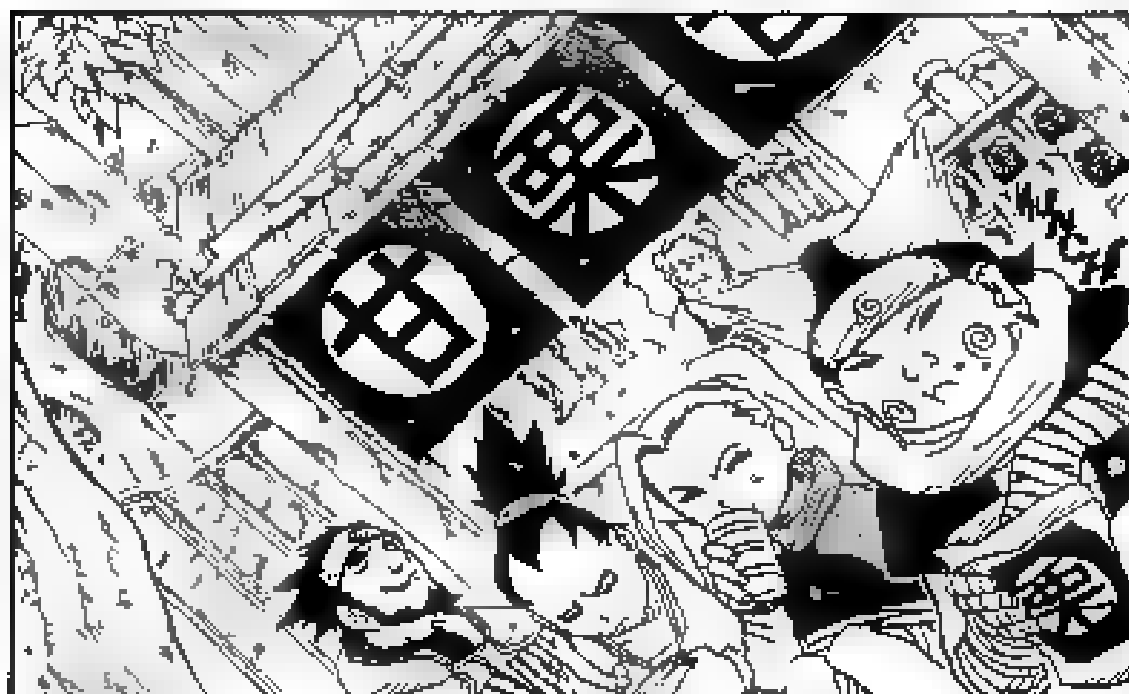


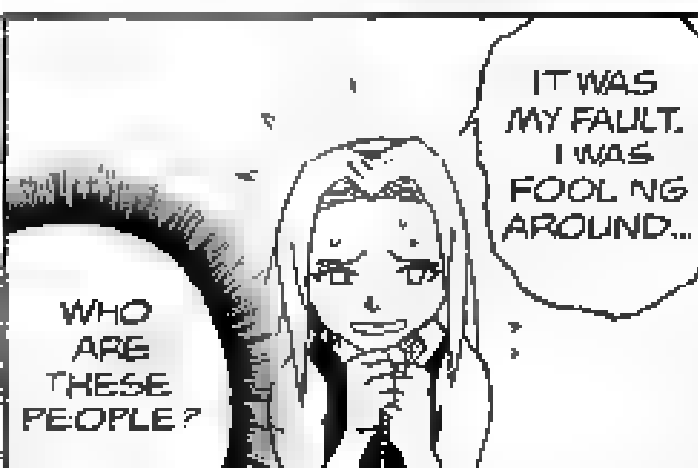
YOU KNOW HOW
IT IS, MASTER IRUKA.
UCHIHA SASUKE IS
IN OUR CELL, TOO.
HE AND NARUTO ARE
LIKE A COUPLE OF
DOGS, ALWAYS
CIRCLING EACH
OTHER, SNAPPING
AND SNARLING.

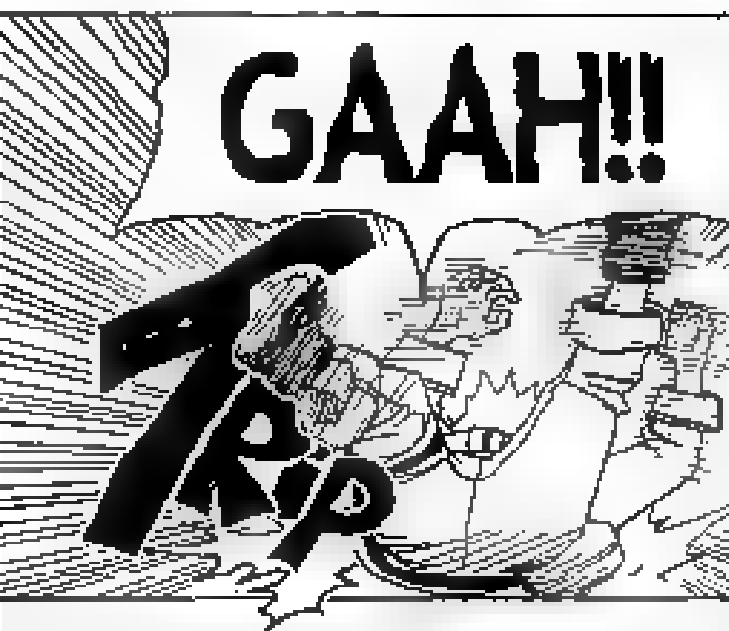


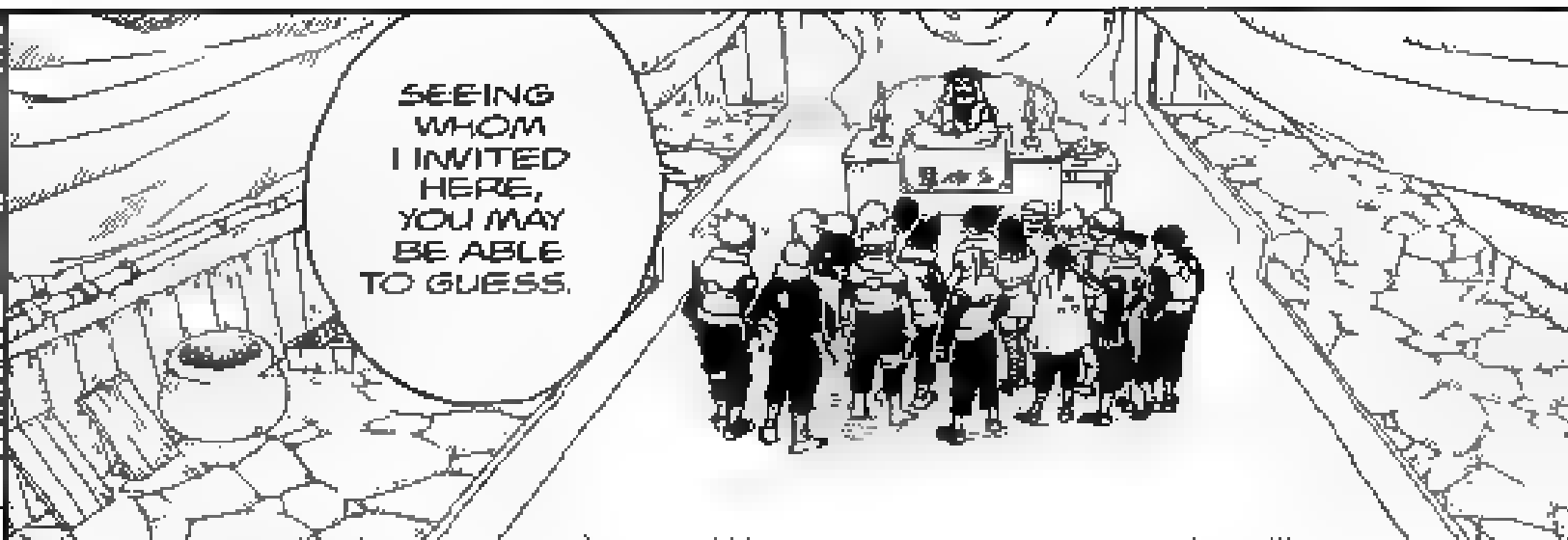




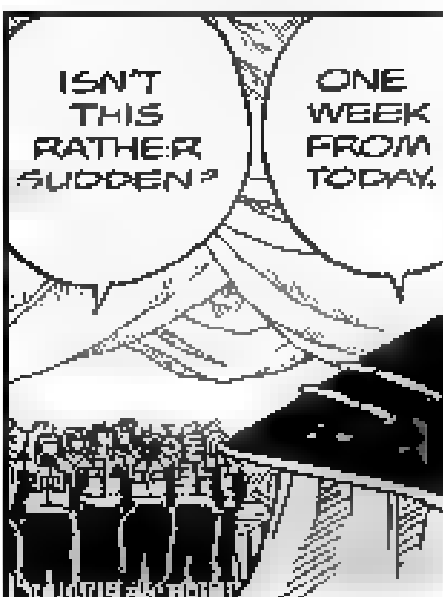








SEEING WHOM
I INVITED
HERE,
YOU MAY
BE ABLE
TO GUESS.



ISN'T
THIS
RATHER
SUDDEN?

ONE
WEEK
FROM
TODAY.

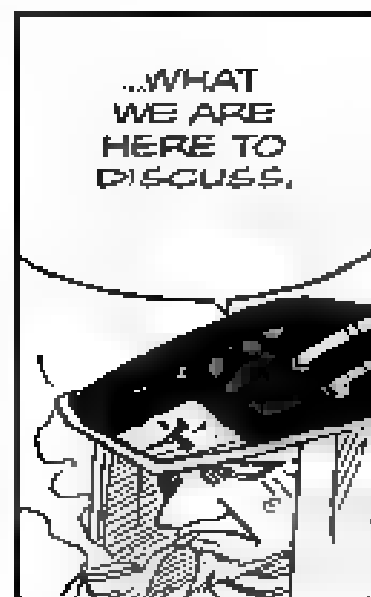


BECAUSE I
BELIEVE I
HAVE
ALREADY
SEEN
SOME OF
THEM IN
OUR
VILLAGE.

HAVE YOL
INFORMED
THE LORDS
OF THE
OTHER
LANDS
YET?

IS
T
TIME
ALREADY?

WHEN
IS
IT
TO
BE?



...WHAT
WE ARE
HERE TO
DISCUSS.



WE
SHALL
BEG N
CONDUCTING
EXAMINATIONS
FOR
JOURNEMEN
NINJA -
THE CHONIN.

TO
MAKE
IT
COMPLETELY
OFFICIAL,
I HEREBY
ANNOUNCE...

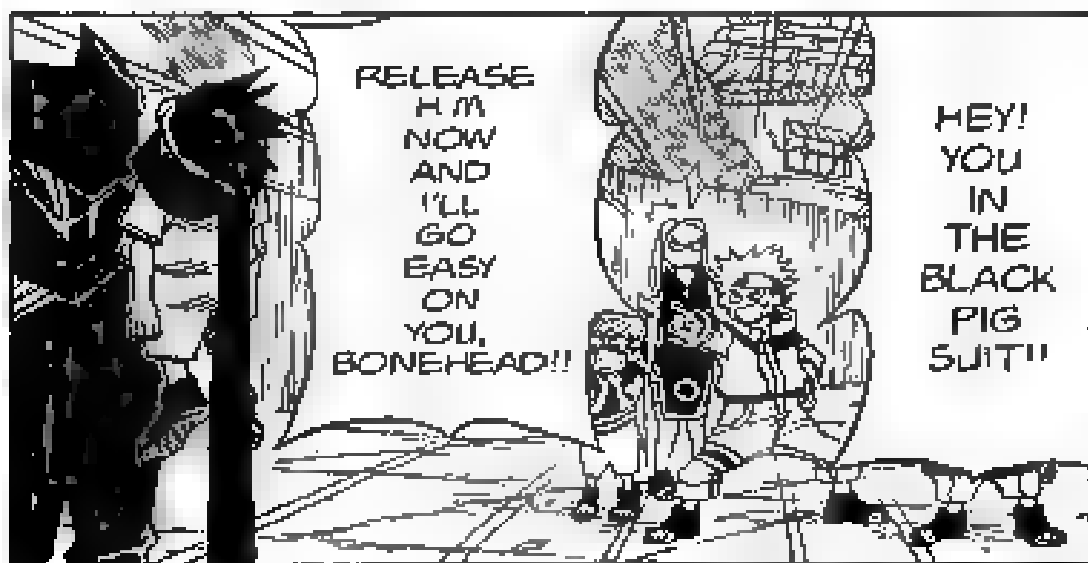
SEVEN
DAYS
FROM
NOW,
ON
JULY
1ST...

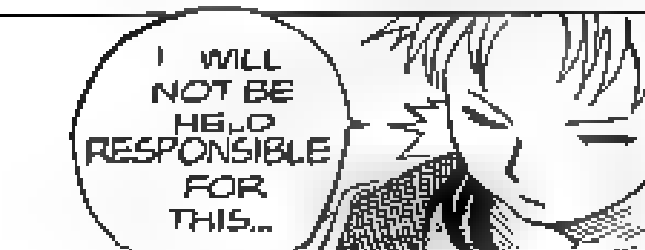




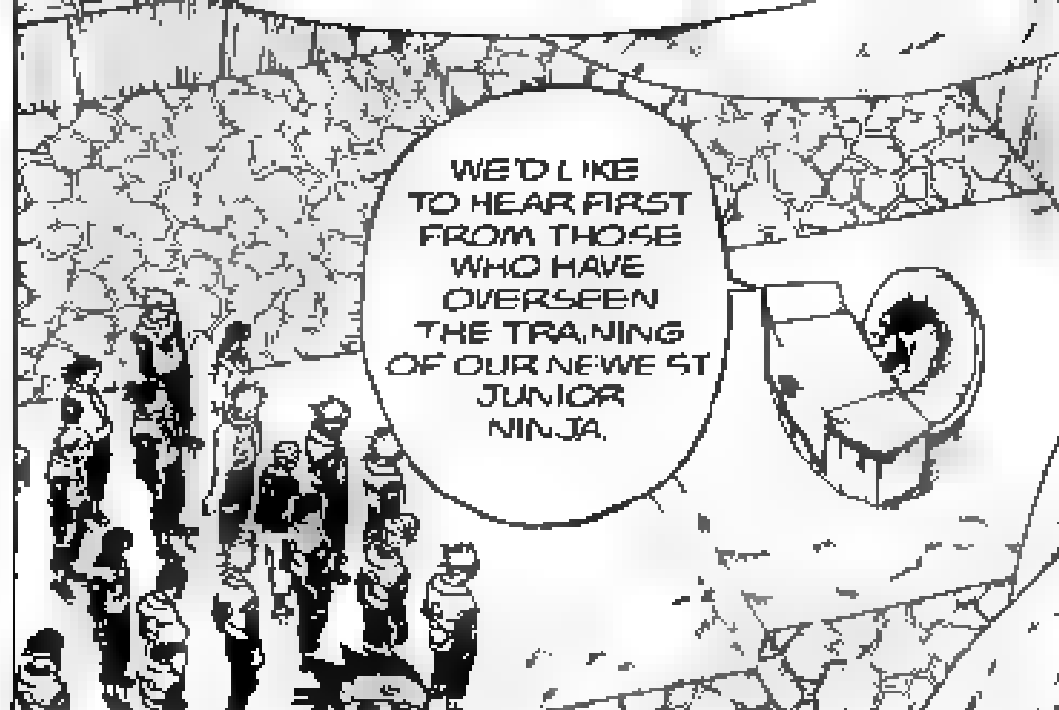
Number 35:

Iruka vs. Kakashi










...DO ANY
OF YOU
HAVE, AMONG
YOUR CHARGES,
ANY GENIN
YOU'D
RECOMMEND
FOR THIS
YEAR'S
JOURNEYMAN
EXAMS?

TELL
US.

MASTERS
KAKASHI,
KURENAI,
AND
ASUMA.

A close-up of Kakashi Hatake's face, partially obscured by his headband with the Konoha symbol. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the side.


BEYOND
THAT, EMPLOY
YOUR OWN
JUDGMENT
AS TO
WHETHER
THEY ARE READY
TO ASPIRE TO
THE NEXT
LEVEL

THEY
MUST HAVE
COMPLETED
A MINIMUM
OF EIGHT
MISSIONS.

THAT
BEFORE
WE CAN
EVEN
CONSIDER
THEM.

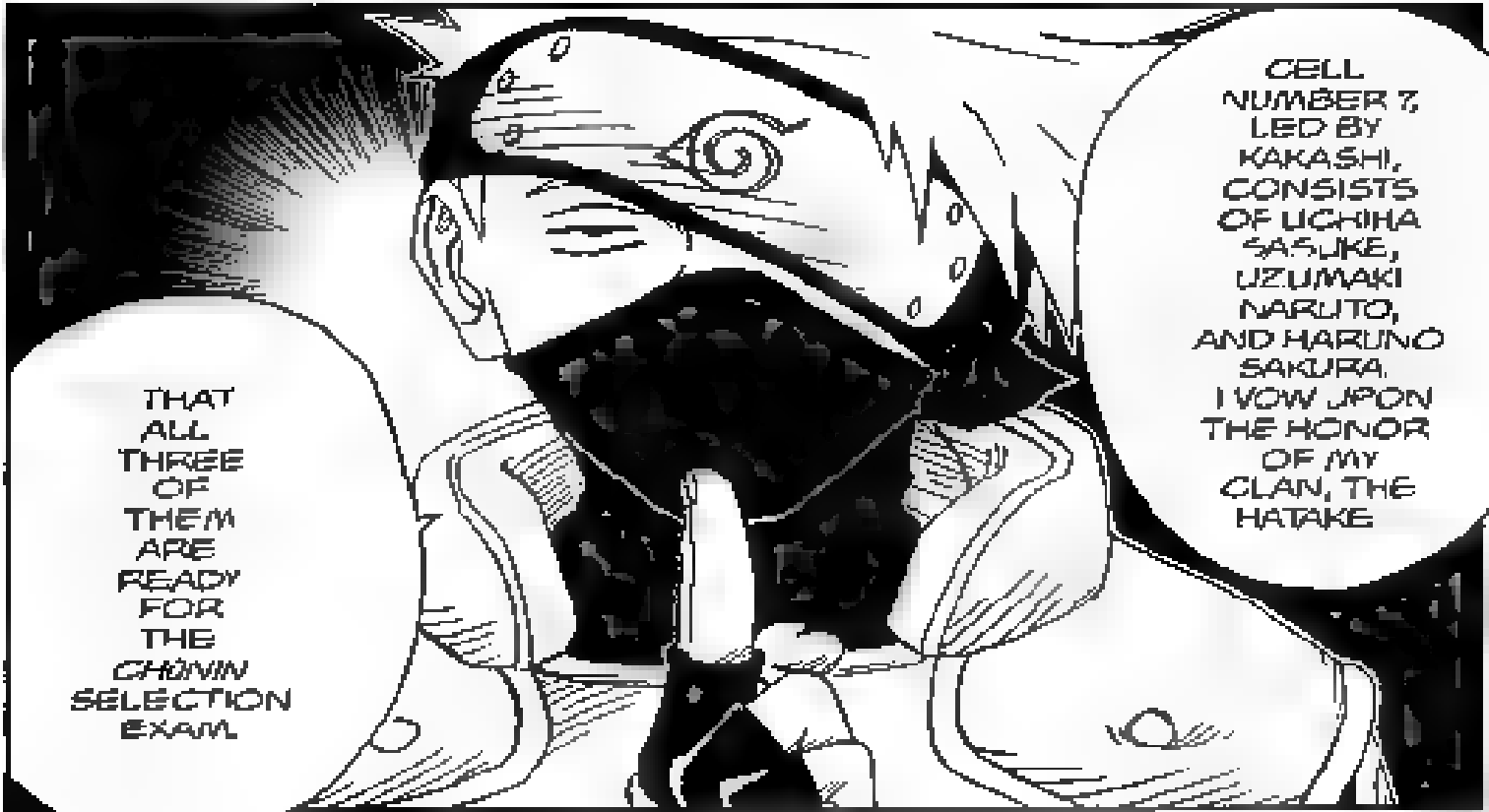
Kakashi is standing in a room, addressing a group of people. He is wearing his signature headband and a light-colored jacket. The background shows other people and a desk with a scroll.

YOU
MAY
BEGIN,
KAKASHI.

A close-up of Kakashi's face, looking slightly to the side with a serious expression. He is wearing his headband and a dark scarf.

HE
SHOULDN'T
BE
ASKING
THIS YET..
IT'S TOO
SOON
FOR ANY
OF THEM.

TO BE TRULY
COMPETITIVE,
CANDIDATES
SHOULD
PROBABLY HAVE
COMPLETED
AT LEAST
DOUBLE THE
RECOMMENDED
NUMBER OF
MISSIONS..

Kakashi is shown from the chest up, wearing his headband and a dark scarf. He is looking down with a serious expression. His hands are clasped in front of him.

THAT
ALL
THREE
OF
THEM
ARE
READY
FOR
THE
CHŪJIN
SELECTION
EXAM.

CELL
NUMBER 7,
LED BY
KAKASHI,
CONSISTS
OF UCHIHA
SASUKE,
UZUMAKI
NARUTO,
AND HARUNO
SAKURA.
I VOW UPON
THE HONOR
OF MY
CLAN, THE
HATAKE



THAT
ALL
THREE
ARE
READY
FOR
THE
CHUNIN
SELECTION
EXAM.

CELL
NUMBER 8,
LED BY KURENAI,
CONSISTS OF
HYUGA HINATA,
INUZUKA KIBA,
AND ABURAME
SHINO. I VOW
UPON MY OWN
CLAN, THE YUHI,
THAT I AM AS
CERTAIN AS IS
MY ESTEEMED
COLLEAGUE -



WHAT?!



HOW UNUSUAL
FOR ALL
THREE OF YOU
TO HAVE
UNHESITATINGLY
ASSENTED...



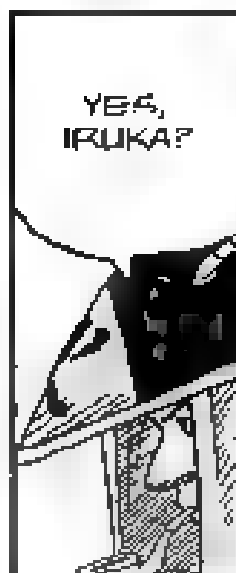
- THAT
ALL
THREE
ARE
READY
FOR
THE
CHUNIN
SELECTION
EXAM.

CELL
NUMBER 10,
LED BY ASUMA,
CONSISTS OF
YAMANAKA INO,
NARA SHIKAMARU,
AND AK MICH
CHOJI!
I VOW UPON MY
CLAN, THE
SARUTOBI, THAT I
AM EQUALLY
AS CERTAIN -

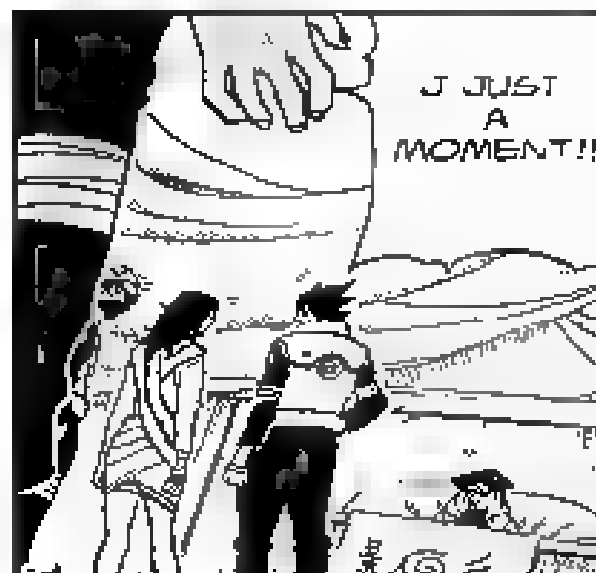


LORD
HOKAGE!

PLEASE
ALLOW
ME
TO
SPEAK!!



YES,
IRUKA?



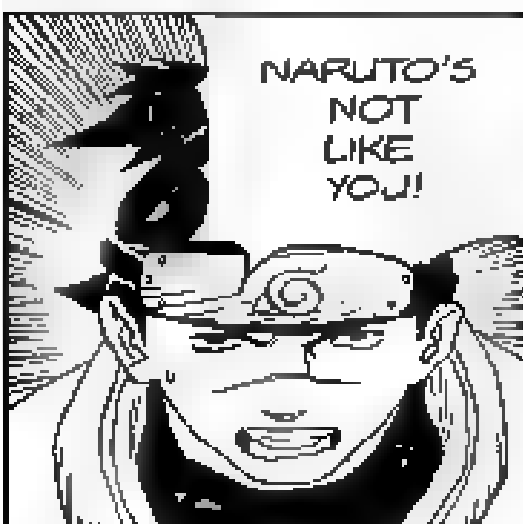
I JUST
A
MOMENT!!



CERTAINLY THEY
ARE ALL GIFTED
AND SHOW BOTH
COMMITMENT
AND TALENT BUT
IT'S TOO SOON
FOR KIDS THAT
YOUNG TO BE
STEPPING
UP TO THE
JOURNEMAN
LEVEL.

FORGIVE
ME IF I
OVERSTEP,
BUT MOST
OF THE
NINE
STUDENTS
JUST
NAMED

... WERE MY
STUDENTS
WHILE
THEY WERE
AT THE
ACADEMY.



NARUTO'S
NOT
LIKE
YOU!

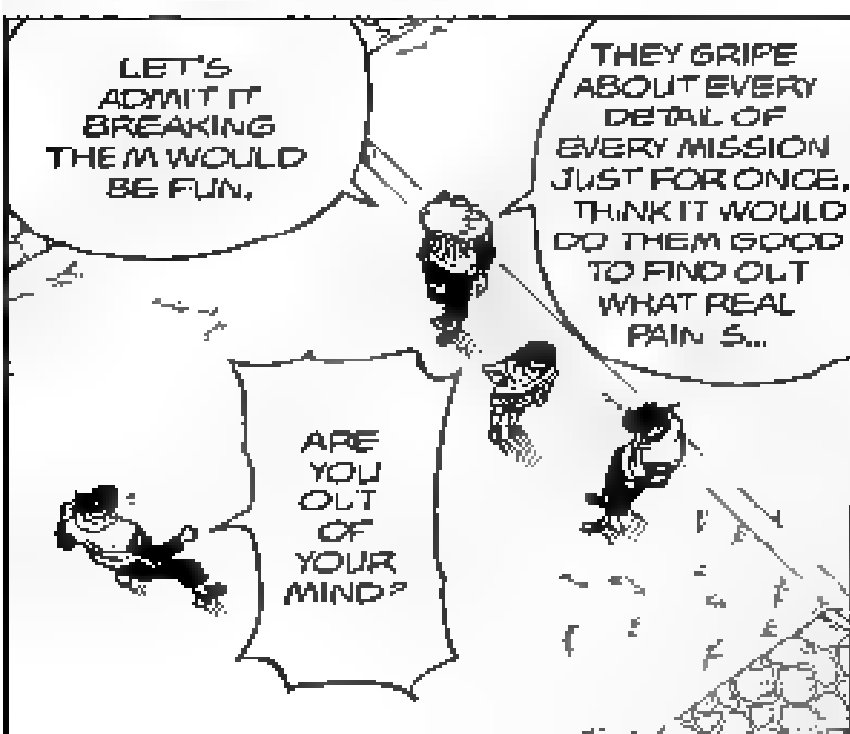


WAS SIX
YEARS YOUNGER
THAN NARUTO
WHEN I ATTAINED
THE RANK OF
CHUNIN,
IRUKA.



ONLY WITH
TIME WILL
THEY HAVE
THE KIND OF
EXPERIENCE
AND MATURITY
THOSE EXAMS
REQUIRE.

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHY
THEIR
SUPERVISORS
CAN'T
SEE THAT.



LET'S
ADMIT IT
BREAKING
THEM WOULD
BE FUN.

ARE
YOU
OUT
OF
YOUR
MIND?

THEY GRIPE
ABOUT EVERY
DETAIL OF
EVERY MISSION
JUST FOR ONCE.
THINK IT WOULD
DO THEM GOOD
TO FIND OUT
WHAT REAL
PAIN IS...



YOU ALL
KNOW WHAT
THEY CALL
THE CHUNIN
SELECTION
EXAMS,
DON'T YOU?

DO YOU
WANT TO
DESTROY
THOSE
CHILDREN?



BUT

I UNDERSTAND YOU...
AND I'M SORRY IF MY RECOMMENDATION UPSETS YOU, BUT I STAND BY IT.

IT WAS A JOKE, MASTER IRLUKA.



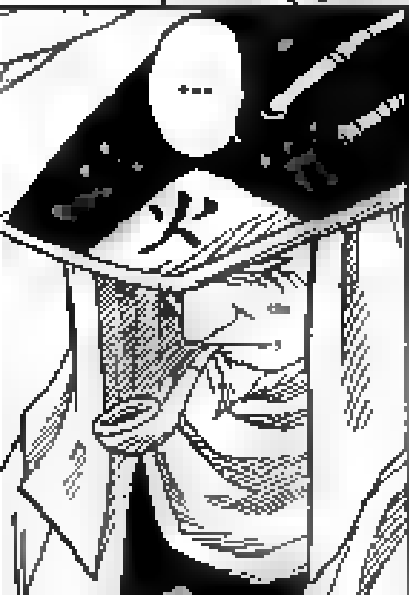
KAKASHI CAN WE FINISH WITH THIS?



IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, ANYWAY...

THEY ARE SOLDIERS UNDER MY COMMAND.

...THEY'RE NOT YOUR STUDENTS ANYMORE.



...



WHAT A PEST



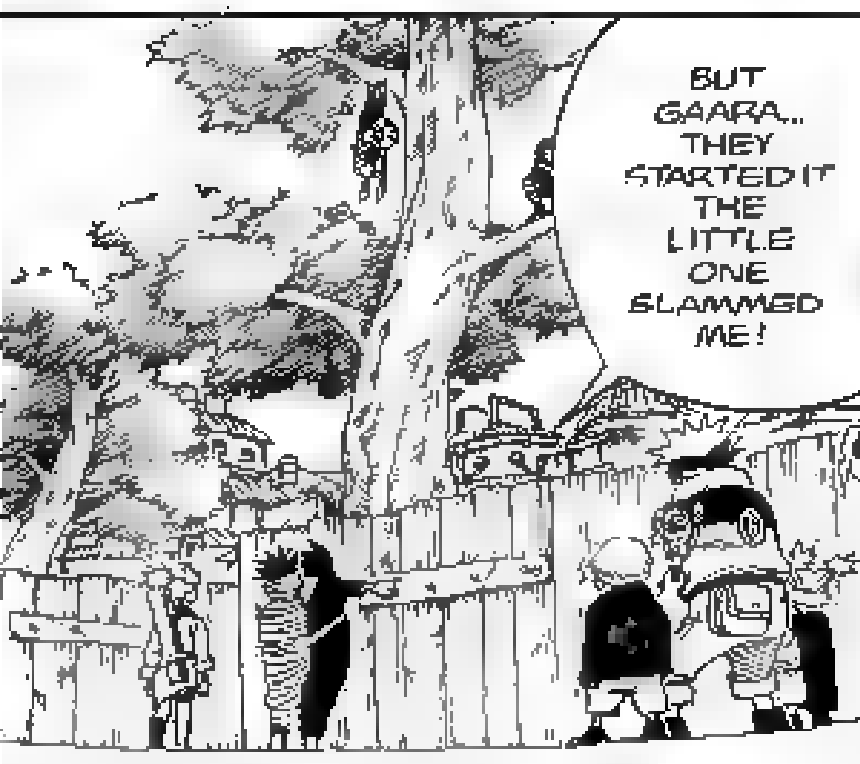
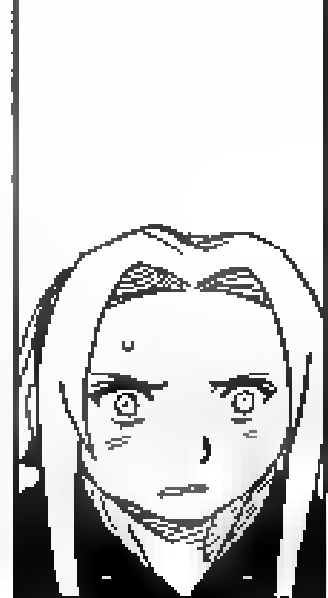
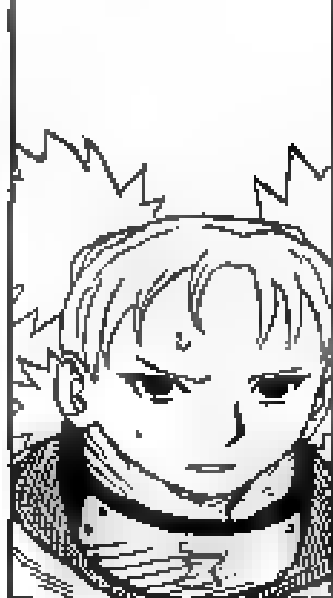
...



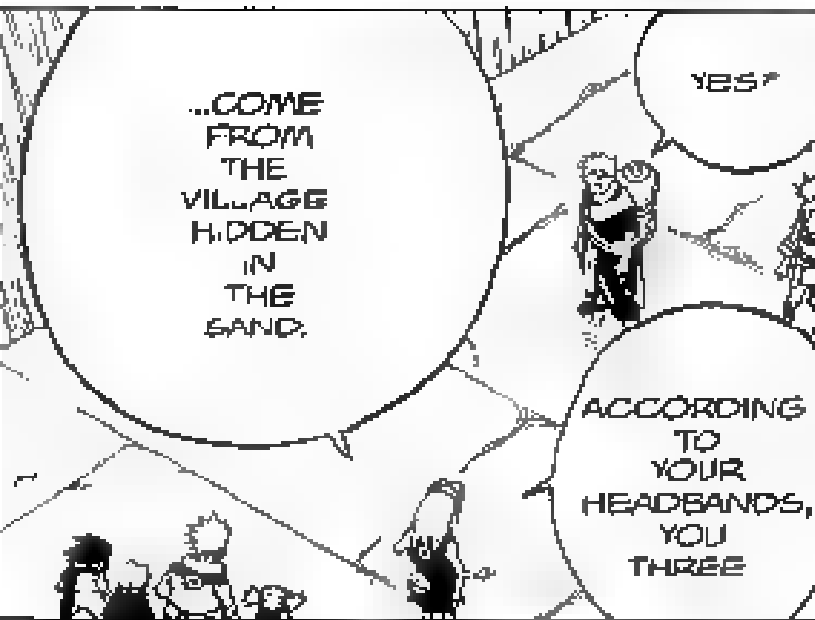


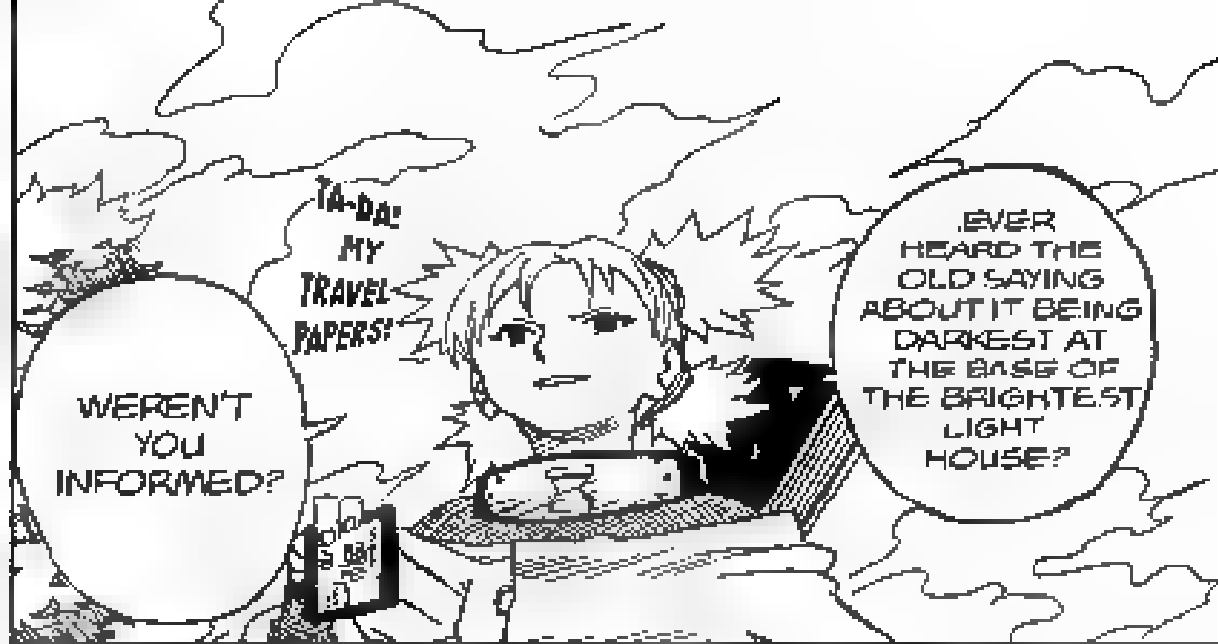
GAARA'S TATTOO SAYS "LOVE."







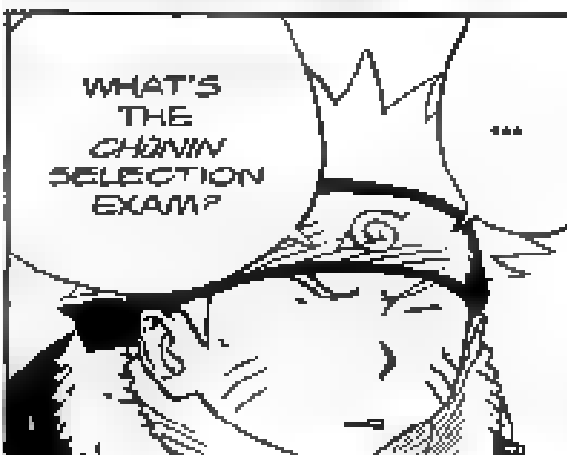




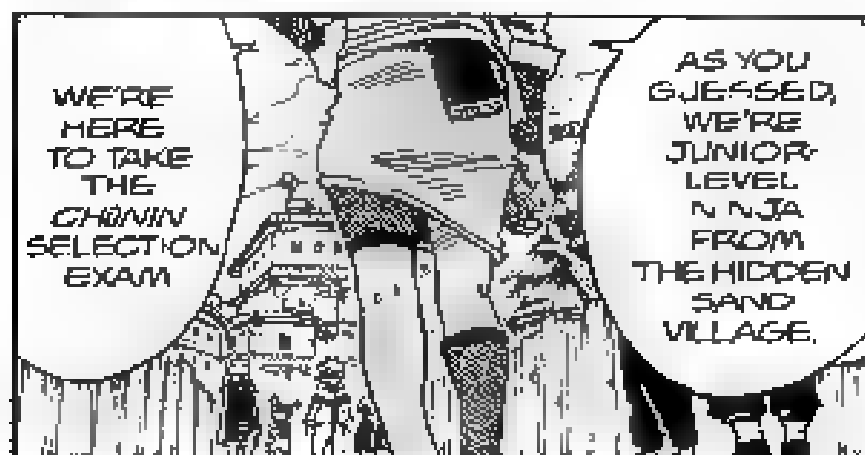
WEREN'T YOU INFORMED?

TA-DA! MY TRAVEL PAPERS!

EVER HEARD THE OLD SAYING ABOUT IT BEING DARKEST AT THE BASE OF THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT HOUSE?

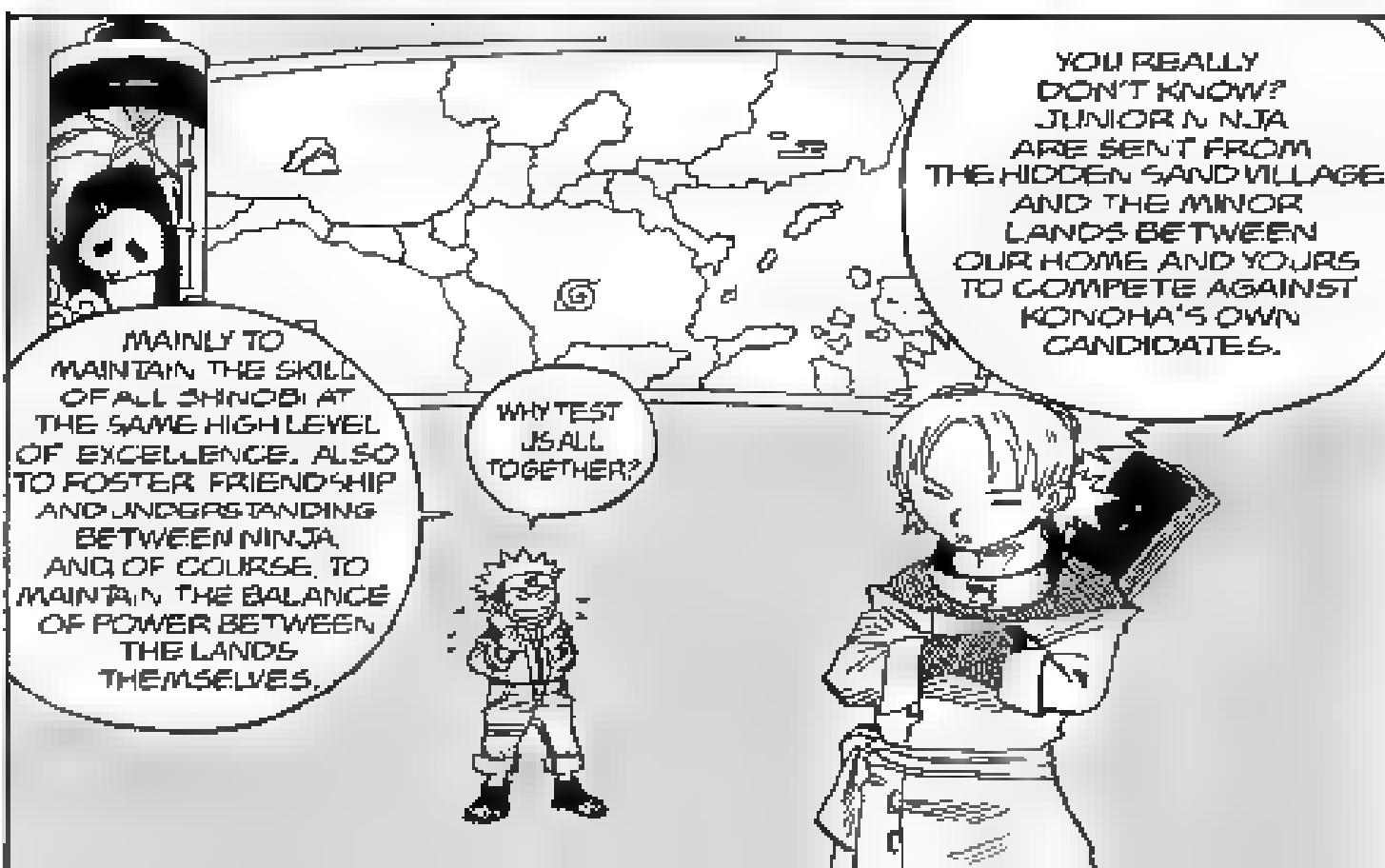


WHAT'S THE CHŪNIN SELECTION EXAM?



WE'RE HERE TO TAKE THE CHŪNIN SELECTION EXAM

AS YOU GUESSED, WE'RE JUNIOR-LEVEL NINJA FROM THE HIDDEN SAND VILLAGE.



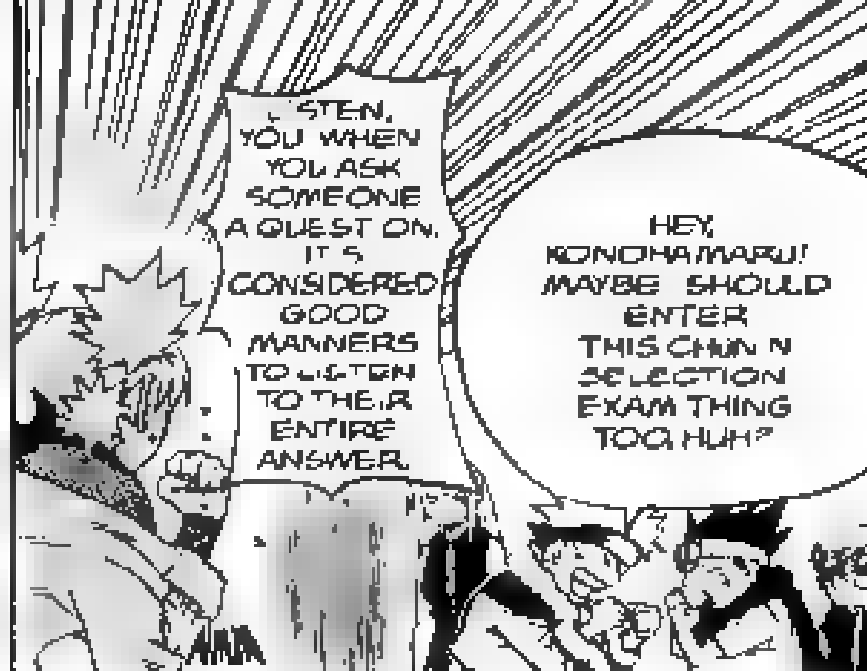
MAINLY TO MAINTAIN THE SKILL OF ALL SHINOBI AT THE SAME HIGH LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE. ALSO TO FOSTER FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NINJA, AND OF COURSE, TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN THE LANDS THEMSELVES.

WHY TEST US ALL TOGETHER?

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW? JUNIOR NINJA ARE SENT FROM THE HIDDEN SAND VILLAGE AND THE MINOR LANDS BETWEEN OUR HOME AND YOURS TO COMPETE AGAINST KONOHA'S OWN CANDIDATES.

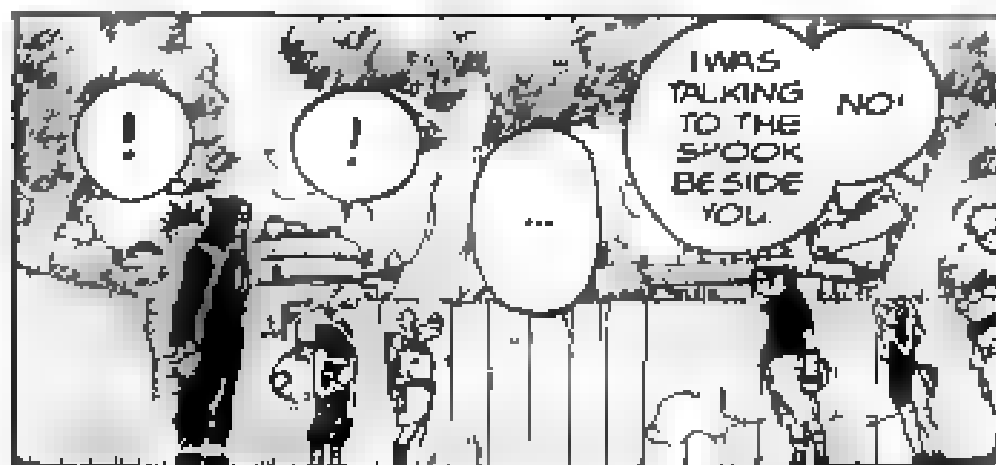


HEY!
YOU
THERE!
WHAT'S
YOUR
NAME?



LISTEN,
YOU WHEN
YOU ASK
SOMEONE
A QUESTION,
IT'S
CONSIDERED
GOOD
MANNERS
TO LISTEN
TO THEIR
ENTIRE
ANSWER.

HEY,
KONOHAMARU!
MAYBE SHOULD
ENTER
THIS CHUN IN
SELECTION
EXAM THING
TOO, HUH?



I WAS
TALKING
TO THE
SPOOK
BESIDE
YOU.

NO!



W-WHO,
ME?

HUH?

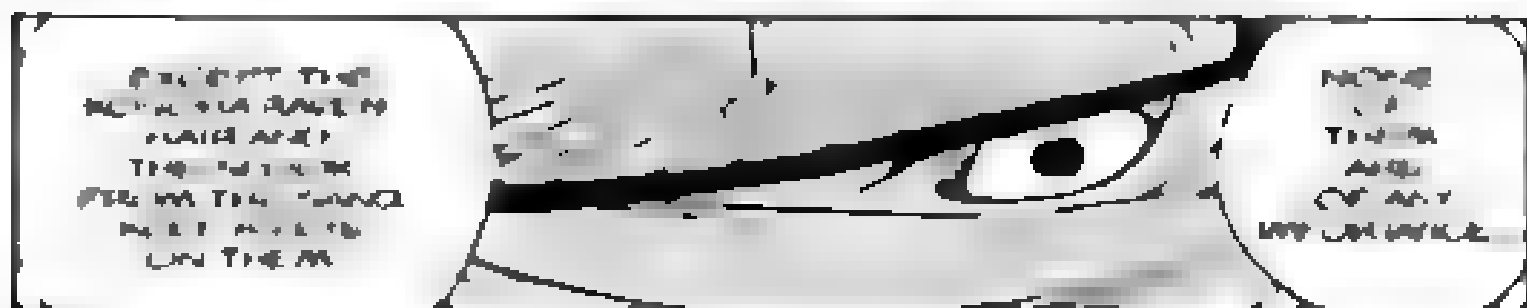
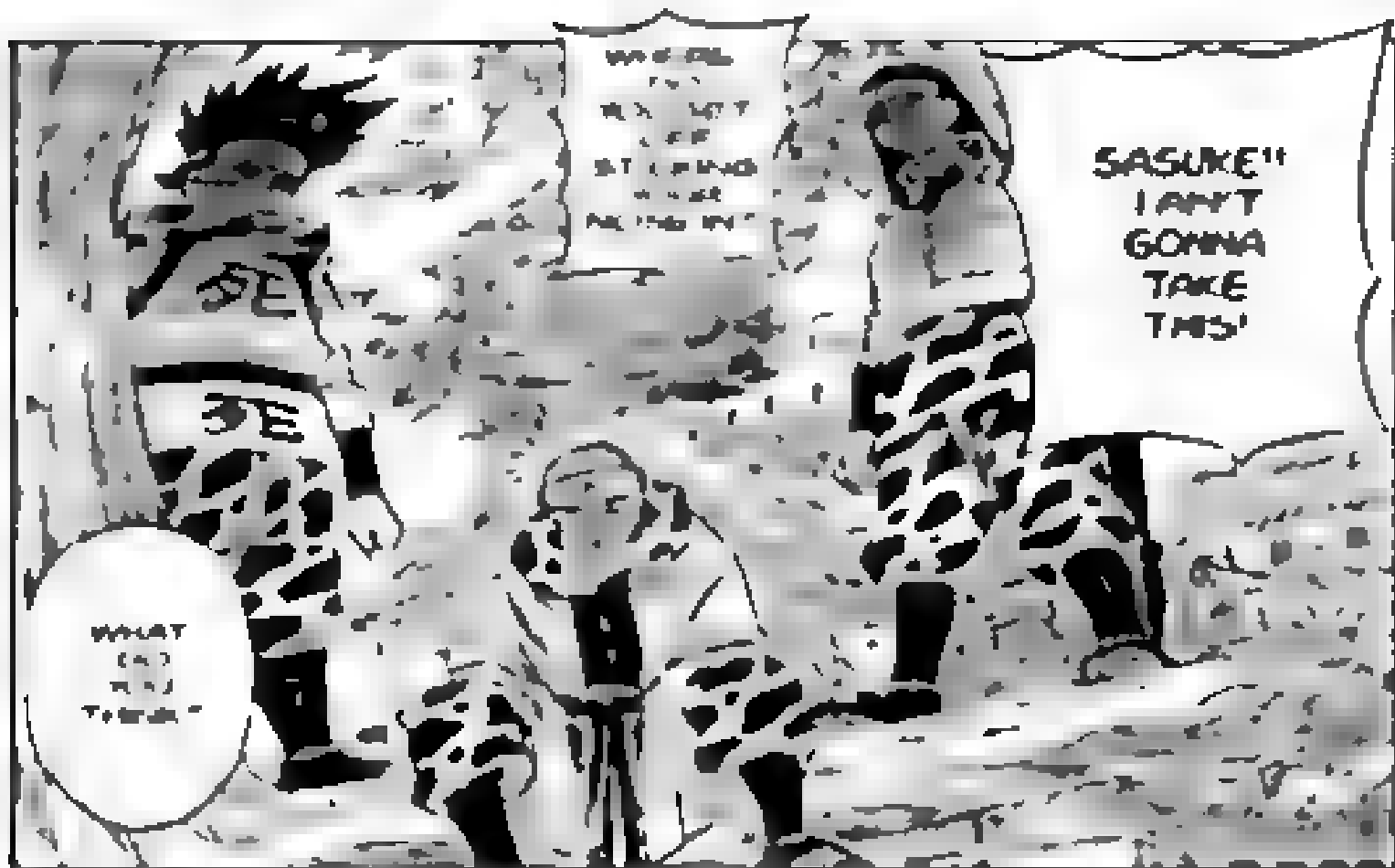


AND
YOU
ARE?

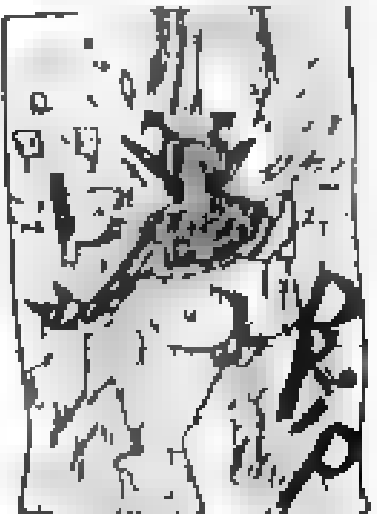
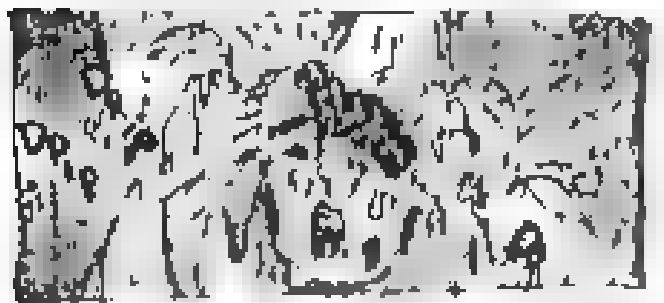
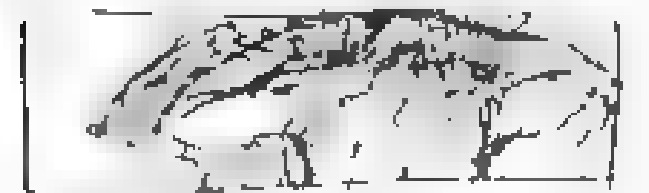


GAARA
OF
THE
DESERT,
AT
YOUR
SERVICE.



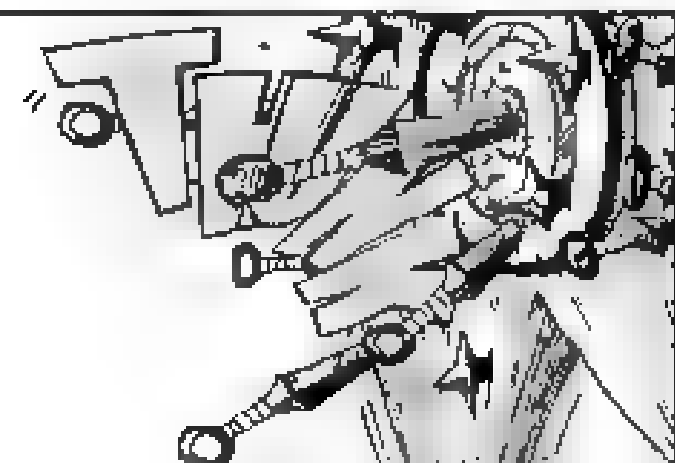
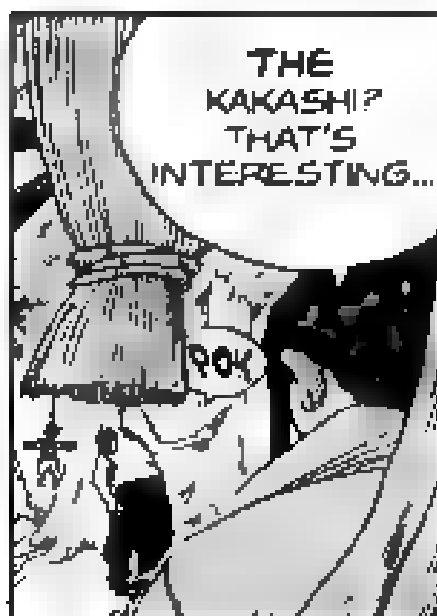
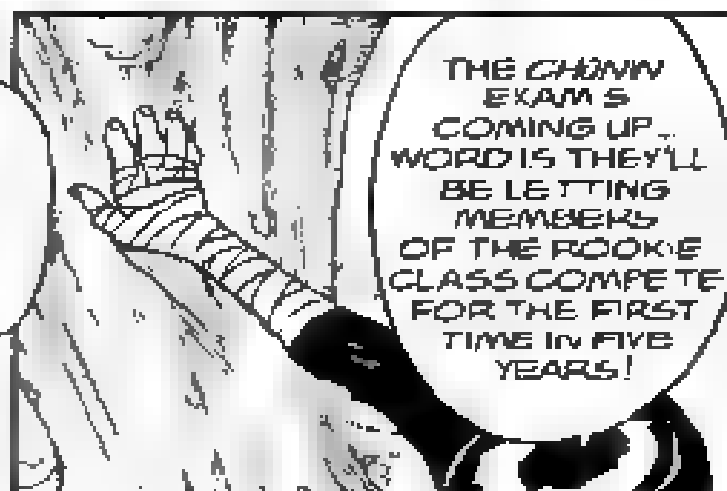
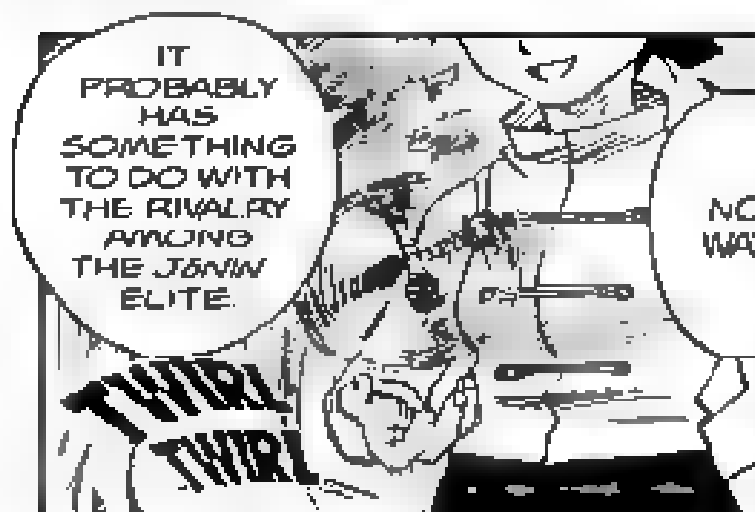
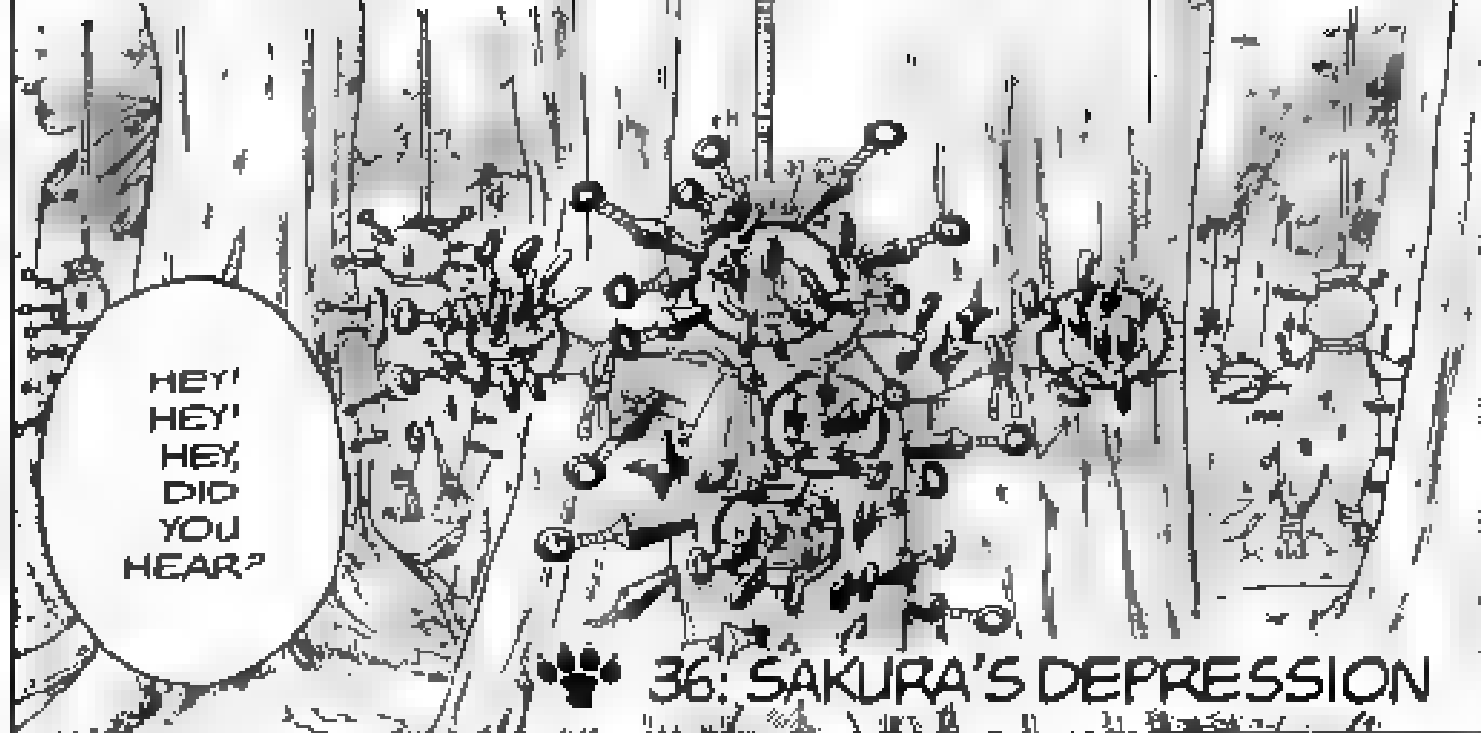


POINTLESS LITTLE STORY



THE EIGHT-FRAME MANGA ON THE LEFT BRINGS BACK FOND MEMORIES FOR ME OF KOISHI, THE FRIEND WHO DREW IT FOR ME BACK IN COLLEGE. I HAD BEEN DRAWING MANGA SINCE MY HIGH-SCHOOL DAYS, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A SINGLE FRIEND WHO SHARED MY PASSION. IN COLLEGE, I HEARD OF A GROUP OF MANGA FANS AND ASPIRING ARTISTS WHO CALLED THEMSELVES THE MANKEN, OR MANGA LAB. BUT THEY WEREN'T SO MUCH DRAWING MANGA AS THEY WERE PATTING EACH OTHER ON THE BACK FOR DRAWING PIN-UPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS WITH NO ATTEMPT AT STORYTELLING WHATSOEVER. I AVOIDED THOSE PHONIES LIKE THE PLAGIE AND WENT MY OWN WAY, TRYING TO DRAW ACTUAL MANGA.

THEN, ONE DAY, I MET A MAN WHO CLAIMED HE HAD DRAWN AUTHENTIC MANGA BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL. I HAD DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER HE WAS ON THE LEVEL, SO CHALLENGED HIM. I WAS DETERMINED TO FIND OUT WHETHER HE WAS A REAL MANGA ARTIST OR ANOTHER PHONY. I DEMANDED THAT HE DRAW A TWO-PAGE STORY FOR ME ON THE SPOT. SO HE DREW THE MANGA ON THE LEFT AND GAVE IT TO ME. IT WAS A MOMENT OF INTENSE JOY FOR ME TO HOLD SOMEONE ELSE'S MANGA IN MY HAND LIKE THAT, FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, AND I TREASURE HIS MANGA TO THIS VERY DAY.





IT
ALL
HAS
A VERY
SAD
SOUND
TO
IT.

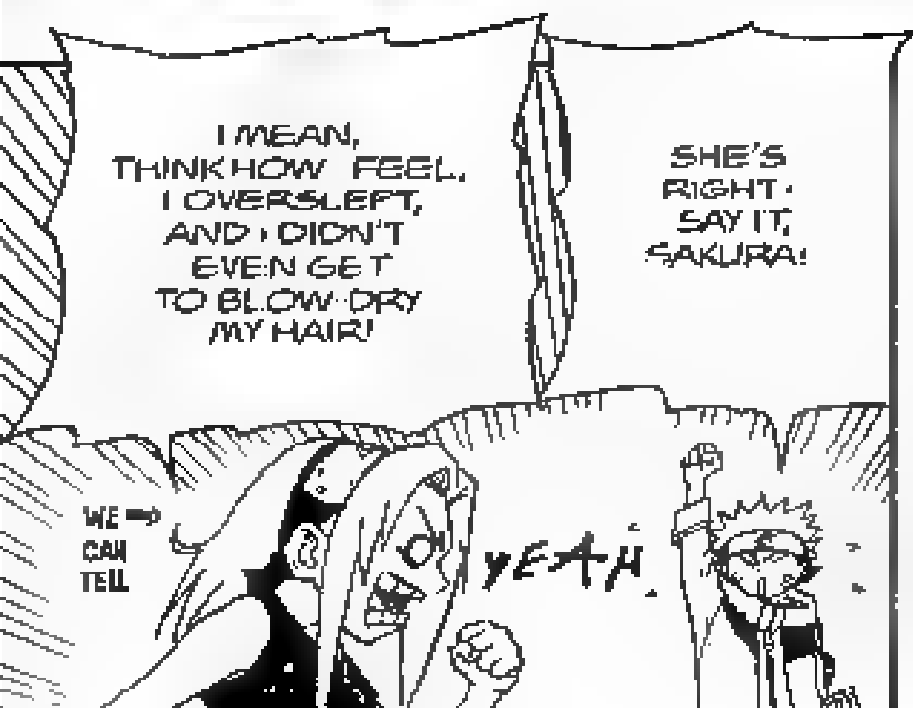
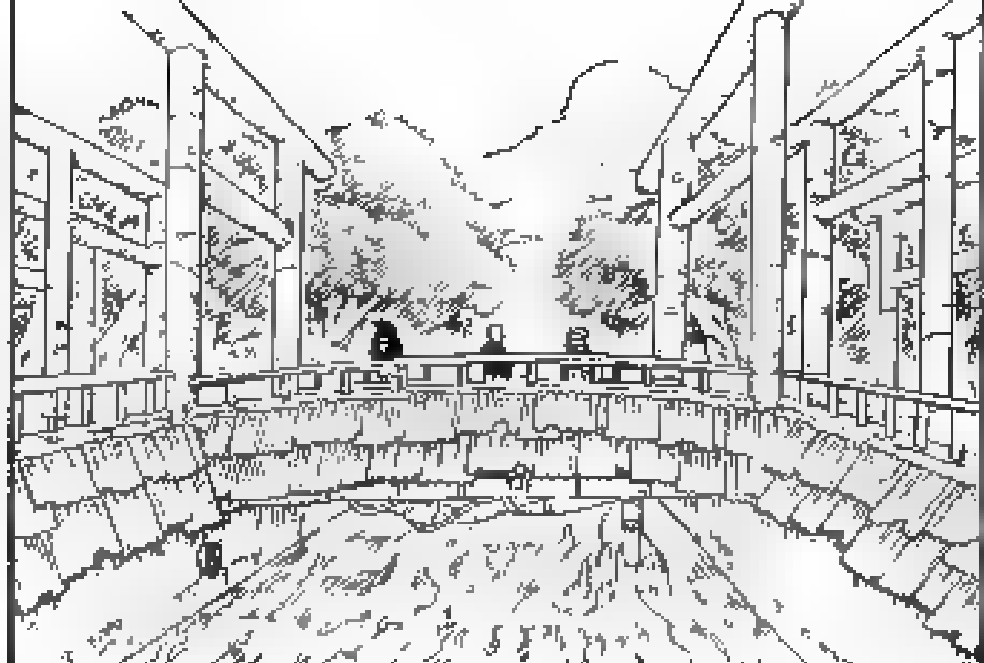


Number 36: Sakura's Depression



SLUMP

SHEESH!



I MEAN,
THINK HOW FEEL.
I OVERSLEPT,
AND I DIDN'T
EVEN GET
TO BLOW DRY
MY HAIR!

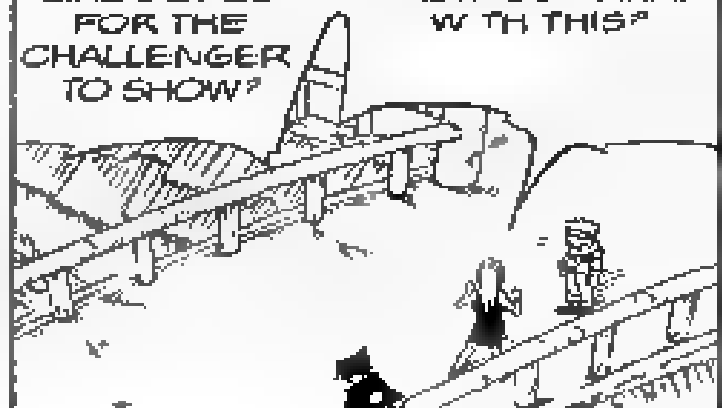
SHE'S
RIGHT.
SAY IT,
SAKURA!

WE
CAN
TELL

YEAH

WHY SIT,
WHENEVER
WE GET
CALLED OUT,
WE END UP
WAITING
LIKE DOPES
FOR THE
CHALLENGER
TO SHOW?

OKAY, LOOK:
ARE WE GOING
TO JUST
STAND AROUND
AND LET
THEM GET AWAY
WITH THIS?



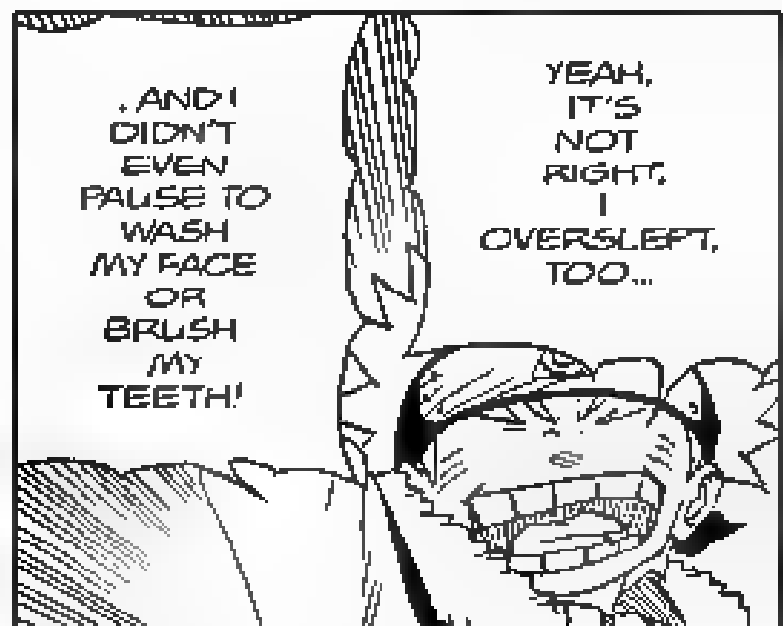
WHY DO
THESE
TWO ALWAYS
WAKE UP
FEELING
DRAMATIC?

EWWW!
GROSS.

HEH.

RRR

GRR
GRR



AND I
DIDN'T
EVEN
PAUSE TO
WASH
MY FACE
OR
BRUSH
MY
TEETH!

YEAH,
IT'S
NOT
RIGHT.
I
OVERSLEPT,
TOO...





HEH
HEH
HEH
HEH



GET OFF
YOU'RE
EMBARRASSING
ME!

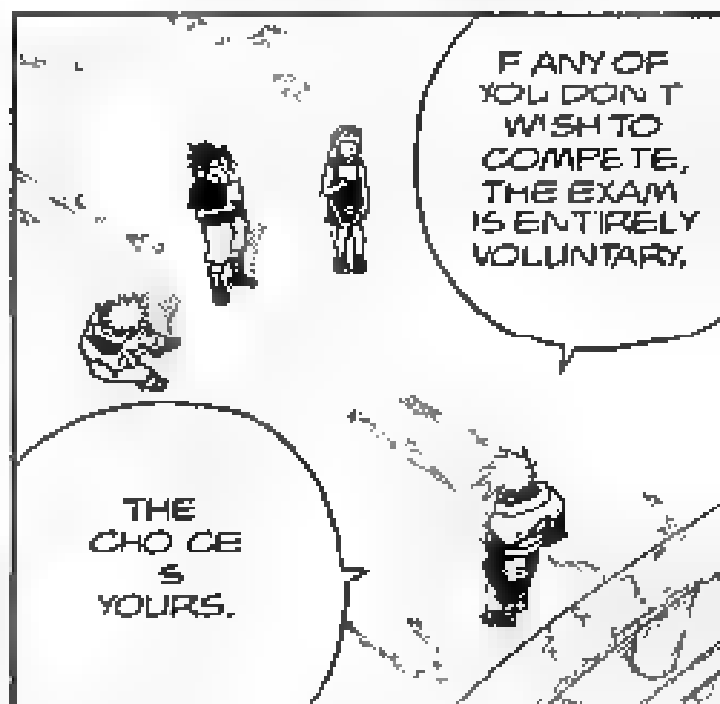
MASTER
KAKASHI,
I LOVE YOU!!

GRAB



IF YOU DO,
REPORT TO
ROOM 301 AT
THE SCHOOL
BY 4:00
TOMORROW
AFTERNOON.

YOU NEEDN'T
TURN IN
THOSE
APPLICATION
FORMS
UNLESS YOU
WANT TO.



IF ANY OF
YOU DON'T
WISH TO
COMPETE,
THE EXAM
IS ENTIRELY
VOLUNTARY.

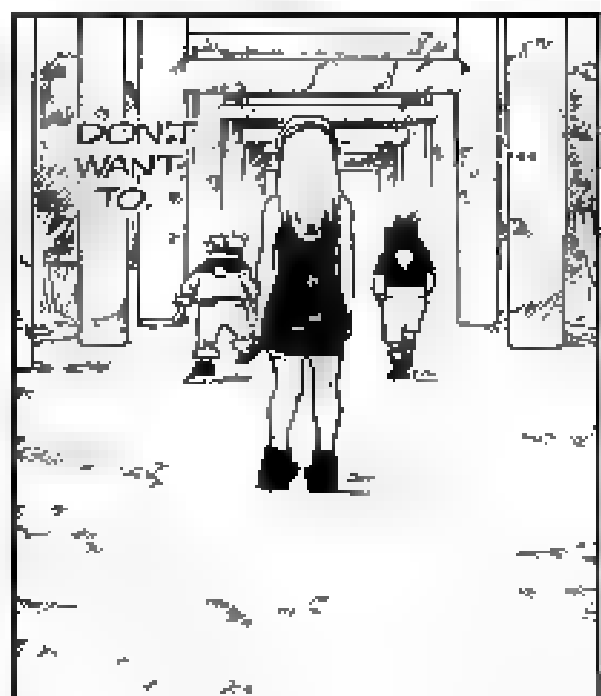
THE
CHOICE
IS
YOURS.

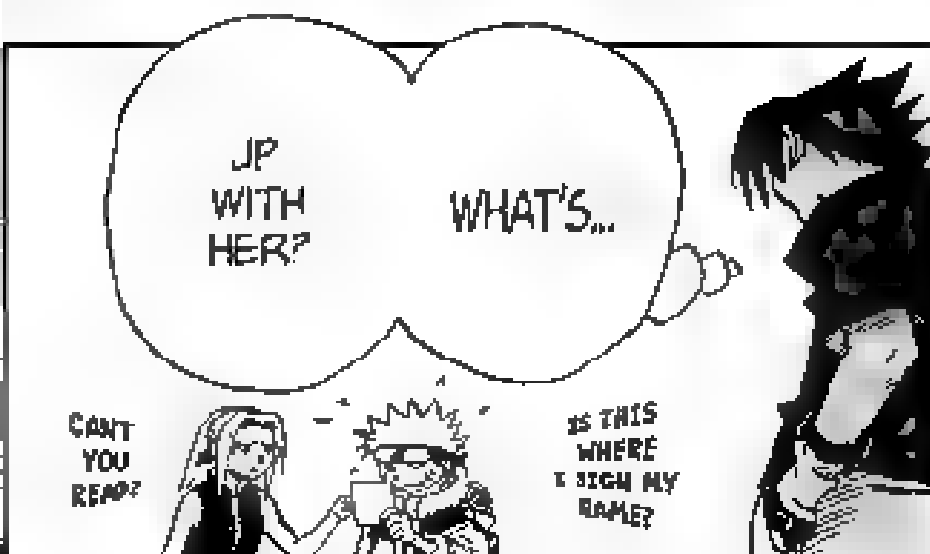
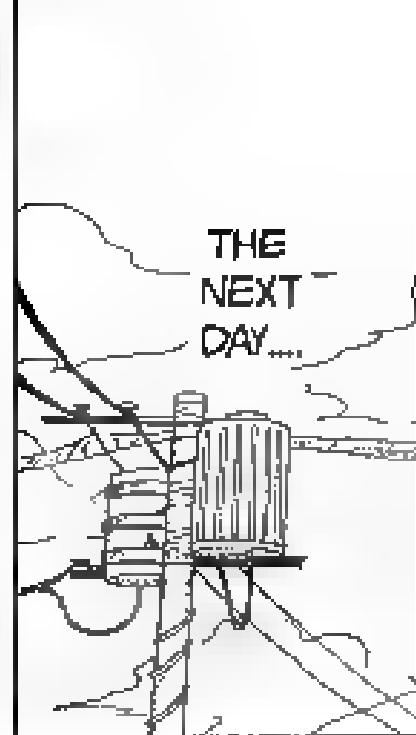
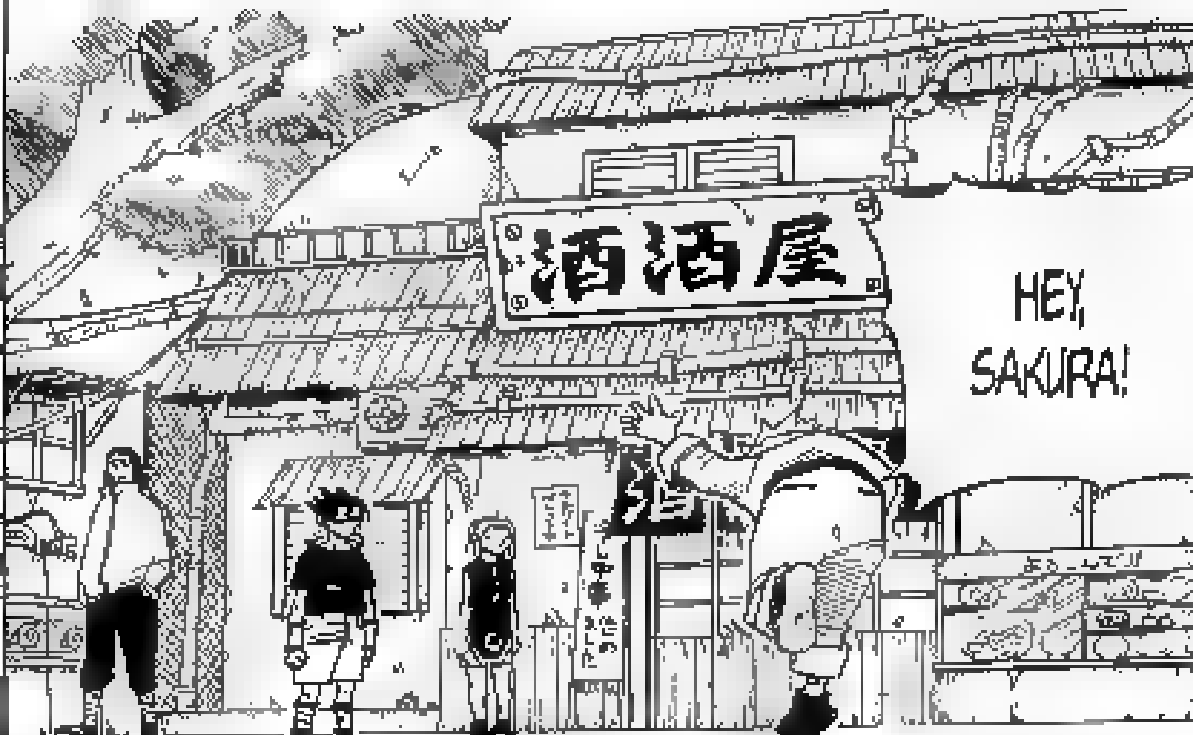


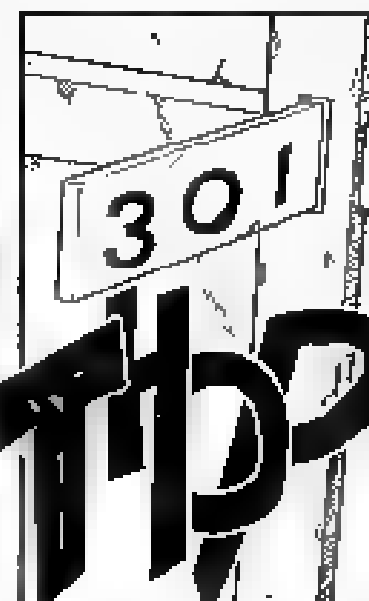
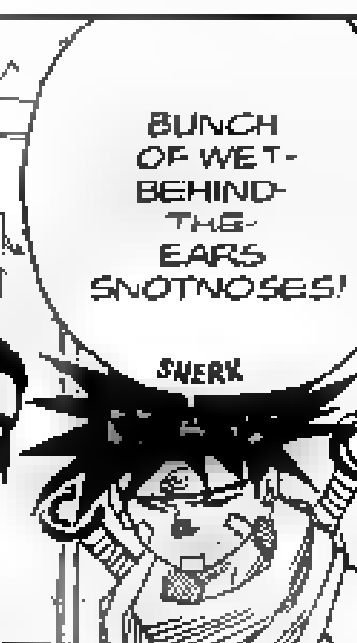
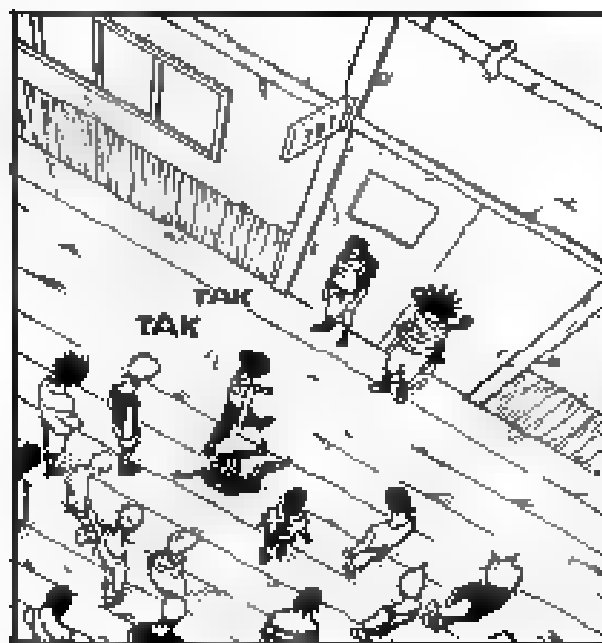
THAT'S
ALL!



I MIGHT
GET TO
FACE OFF
AGAINST
THAT
SPOOK.









WE'RE
JUST
TRYING
TO SPARE
YOU...

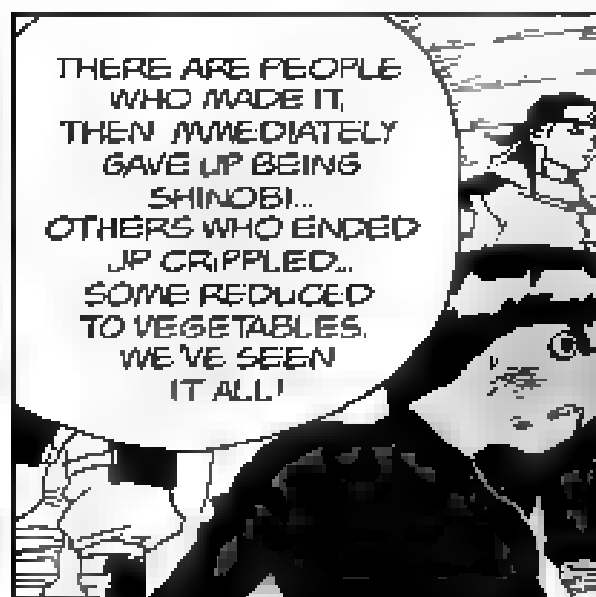
YOU
MISUNDER-
STAND!



WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?



WHOA
AW, MAN



THERE ARE PEOPLE
WHO MADE IT,
THEN IMMEDIATELY
GAVE UP BEING
SHINOBI...
OTHERS WHO ENDED
UP CRIPPLED...
SOME REDUCED
TO VEGETABLES.
WE'VE SEEN
IT ALL!

THE CHONIN
EXAM IS
INCREDIBLY
DIFFICULT...
AND WE
SHOULD KNOW
WE'VE FAILED
THREE
TIMES
SO FAR.



AND
YOU
LITTLE
PUNKS
HAVE
THE
NERVE
TO APPLY?

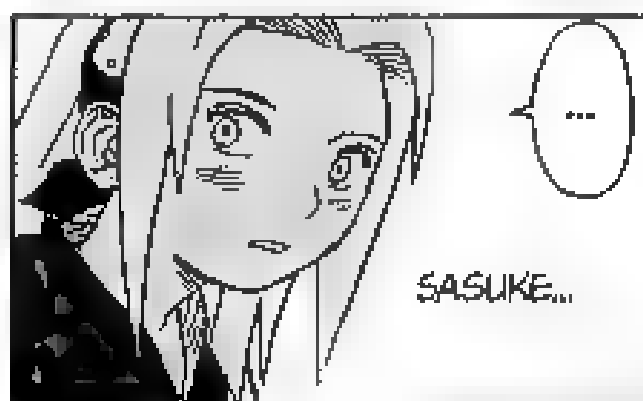
SHORT

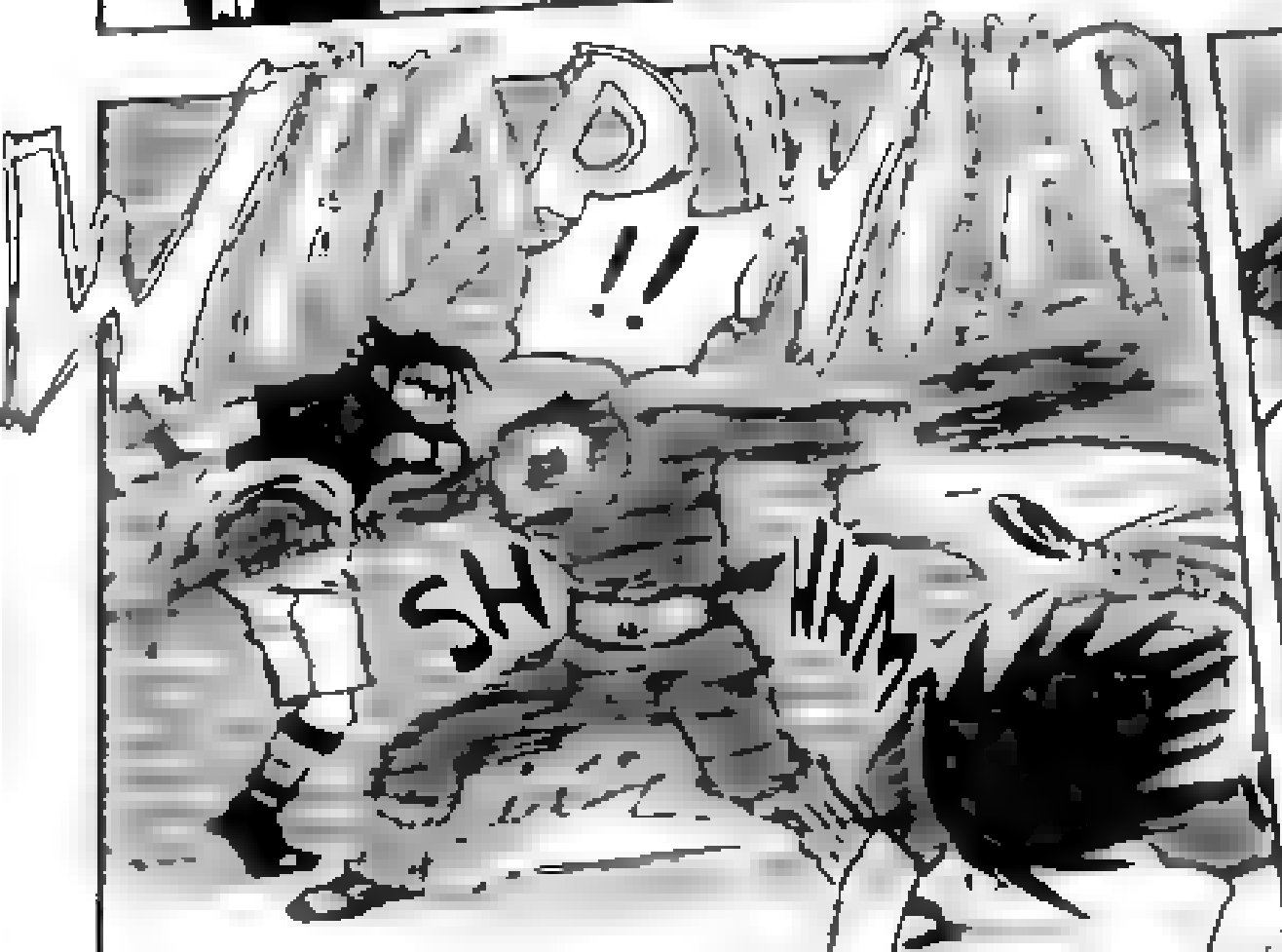
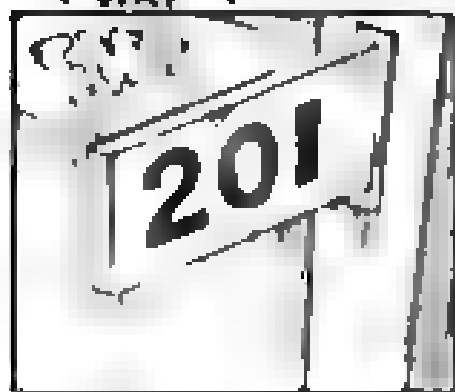


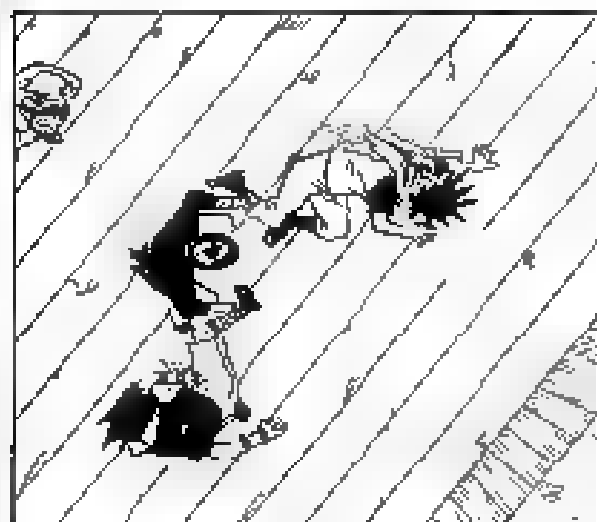
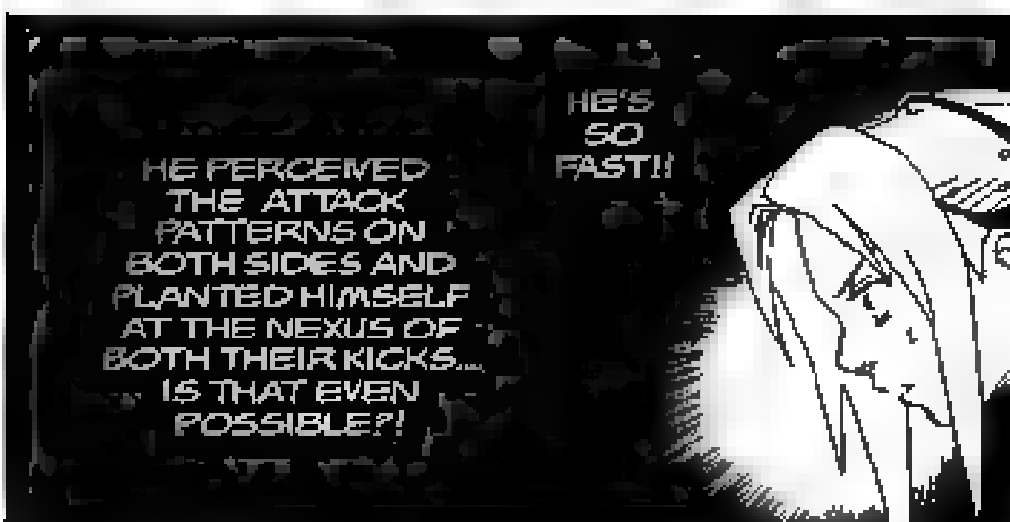
THE
RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR FAILED
MISSIONS
AND DEAD
SHINOBI REST
FIRMLY
ON THEIR
SHOULDERS.

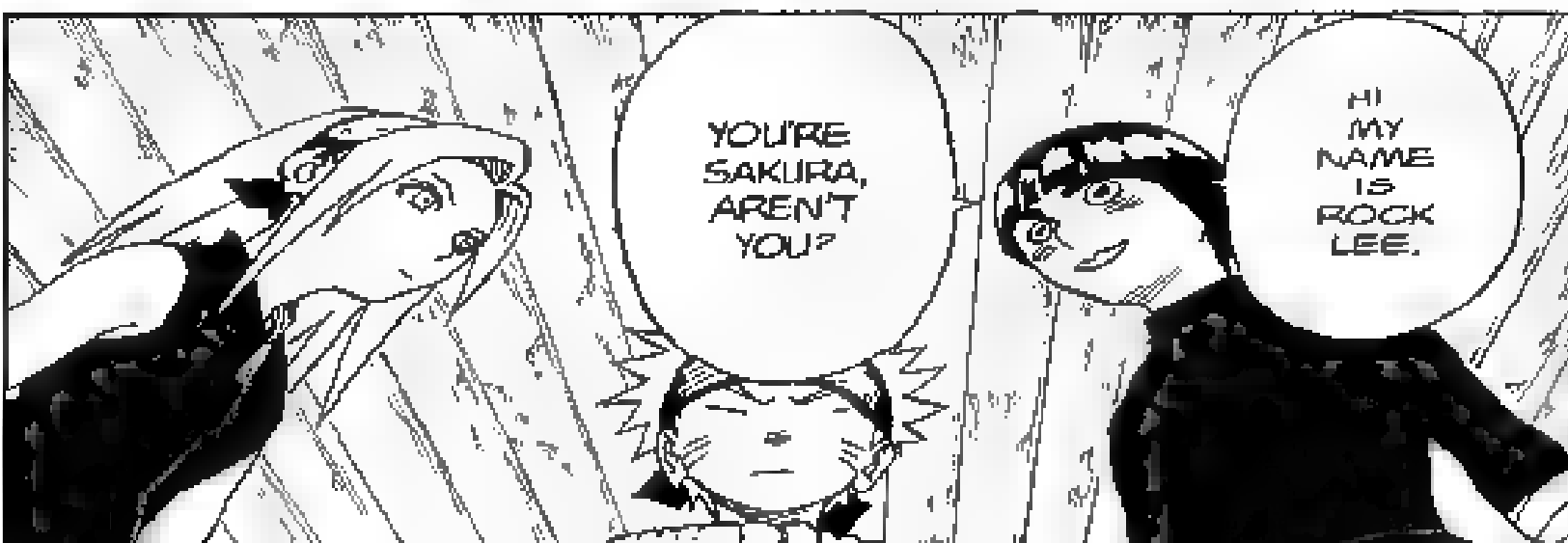
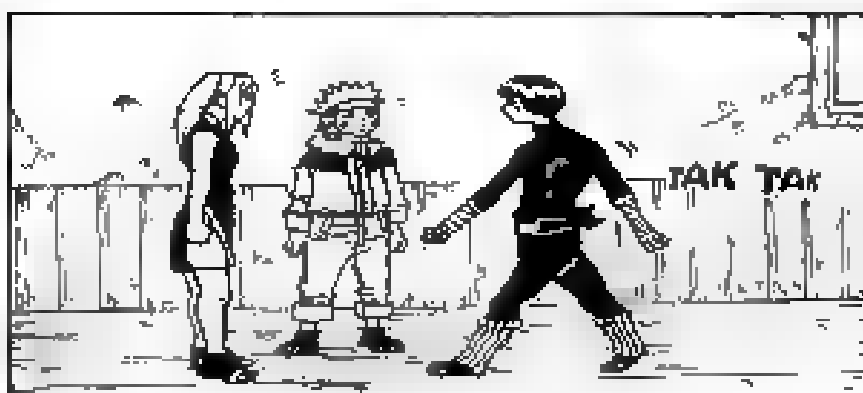
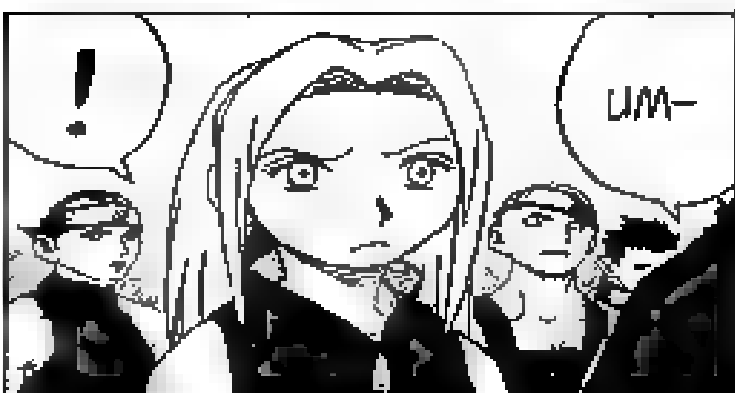
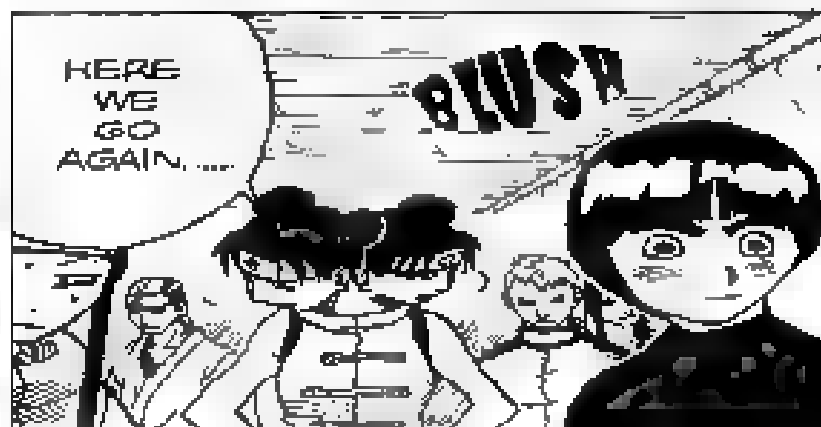
BESIDES
THAT,
CHONIN
ARE CELL
COMMANDERS.
THEY LEAD
THEIR
UNITS.



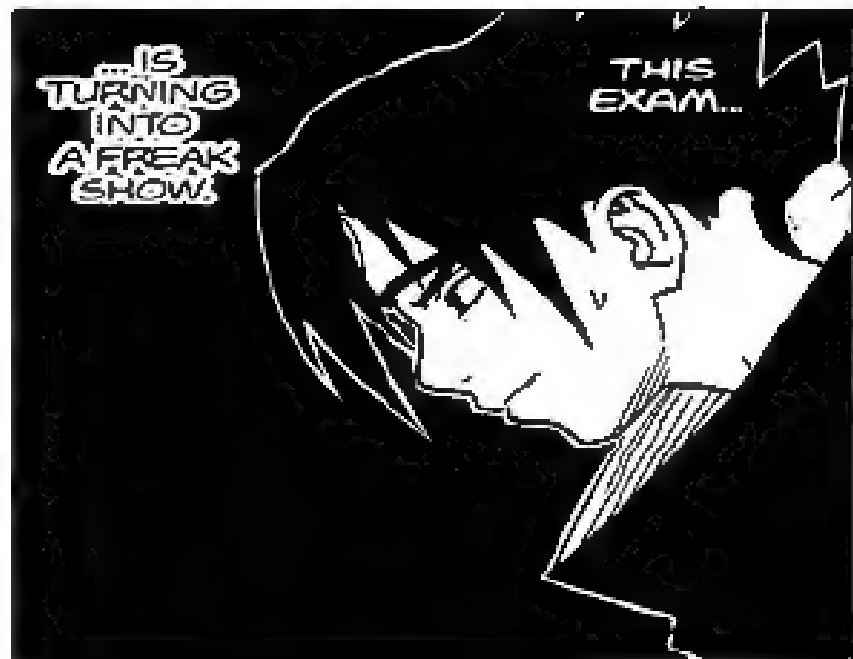
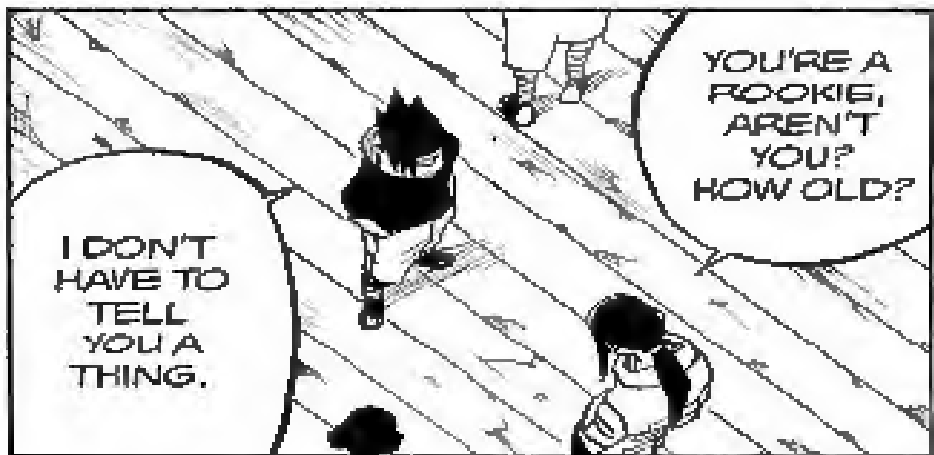














YEP.

HEH...
SO THOSE
ARE KAKASHI
AND GUYS' PRECIOUS
BRATS, EH? WELL,
AT LEAST THEY
MANAGED TO SUBMIT
APPLICATIONS.



NOW!
SASUKE,
NARUTO,
LET'S
GO!!



IT LOOKS
LIKE WE
CAN AMUSE
OURSELVES
WITH THIS
YEAR'S
CROP.

SHORT

A LITTLE
PERK
FOR
BEING
THE
PROCTORS.



LET'S GO,
LEE.
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?



STOP
PULLING

TRALALA
RAA

STOP

